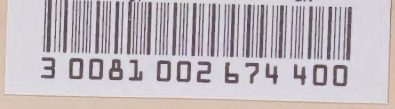


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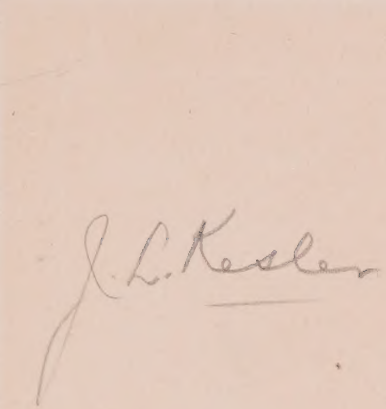

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# PSYCHOLOGY'S DEFENCE OF THE FAITH

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# Psychology's Defence of the Faith

BY

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# PREFACE

THE lectures on which this book is based were delivered at the Summer Conference of the Student Christian Movement at Swanwick in July 1929. Having been prepared for that particular audience and occasion, and with a quite limited aim, they were—as will be obvious—in no way systematic or comprehensive, but I have revised them for publication in response to many requests from those who heard them.

Apart from some modifications and additions suggested by discussions at the Conference, I have retained the original form of the material, and may perhaps, therefore, be excused for certain repetitions of statement and crudities of language, also for not giving references in every case where I may have adopted, consciously or otherwise, the ideas or phraseology of other writers.

In two instances, however, my borrowing has been so direct that specific acknowledgement is due. In part of the section on the psychology of belief I have followed Dr Thouless' *Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, and one

or two paragraphs dealing with suggestion owe much to Miss Rouse and Dr Crichton-Miller's *Christian Experience and Psychological Processes*.

I have included a lecture on "Spiritual Healing," which was delivered to a similar audience on another occasion, as I was able to refer only very briefly to that subject in the Swanwick course.

Even though I have here dealt with only one particular application of psychology, it is with some hesitation that I have consented to add one more to the very large number of small psychological books which are appearing at the present time. There is no branch of knowledge where short cuts and stock formulas are more thoroughly unsatisfactory, and even dangerous, than in modern psychology, and I should be sorry to give the impression of encouraging any evasion of the long and difficult process of study and discipline which is essential for those who require to gain any comprehensive understanding of the subject in all its bearings. Fortunately, as I have indicated more fully in the book itself, that is unnecessary for the great majority of people, as unnecessary as a detailed knowledge of the physiological chemistry of their bodies. A certain measure of understanding, however, is desirable on practical

grounds, and I can only hope that what I have written is sufficiently clear, without being too technical, to be of some use to that end as regards the region of experience with which it is concerned.

I am much indebted to my friend Rev. Professor A. B. Macaulay, D.D., and to my brother, Dr Henry Yellowlees, for valued advice and suggestions, and to my original audience for their stimulating criticism and encouragement.

D. YELLOWLEES.

GLASGOW,
*November* 1929.

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# Psychology's Defence of the Faith

## CHAPTER I

### PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION

1. INTRODUCTION.

Psychology and religion are very large and complicated subjects, and in a short course of four lectures I can only select one or two aspects of their relationship for discussion. My aim is quite simple and quite limited. There is a good deal of psychological and pseudo-psychological talk going on in these days, a certain vagueness as to what "the new psychology" means or teaches, a recognition that it is an unsettling sort of thing in many ways, and a notion, or a fear, that it has rendered some at least of the beliefs and mental attitudes of religious people less tenable than formerly.

I propose, therefore, in the first place to consider what psychology has to do with religion at all, and to outline briefly some of the psychological factors concerned in religious belief and its development. I shall then try to give you some idea of certain modern theories and discoveries which claim to provide an

explanation of these psychological factors themselves, in particular those discoveries and theories concerned with the deeper unconscious levels of the mind which are associated with the names of Freud and Jung. We shall then be in a position to consider the criticism of religion which is based on these theories, and whether, and how, it may be met, and also whether the contribution of modern psychology to religion may not be somewhat more positive and constructive and valuable than some people seem able to realise or believe. We shall inevitably touch many profound philosophical and theological questions which we should have to leave on one side in any case through lack of time, even if I were competent to deal adequately with them. I may also say now, and be done with apologies, that I am painfully aware of the brevity and incompleteness and apparent dogmatism which will be unavoidable.

The relationship between psychology and religion is one aspect, the aspect which is perhaps most prominent at the present time, of the general relationship between science and religion, because, although it has certain limitations in that connection, psychology does claim to have the status and to use the methods of a branch of science. The relationship of science and religion has been debated in one form or another for centuries, and it is only in comparatively recent times that it has come to be fully recognised by the more intelligent people on both

sides of the controversy that, while there certainly is a relationship, that relationship is not an antithesis. Much trouble and misunderstanding can be prevented if we take care to avoid false antitheses. Duty and pleasure, knowledge and innocence, philosophy and common sense, capital and labour, science and religion, are sometimes spoken about as if the contrast and opposition between them were as definite and inevitable as between true and false or black and white. One good way of avoiding that danger of false antithesis is to define your terms before you begin to argue. We are in terrible bondage to words, and once we get hold of a few good, big, impressive words, we are apt to fling them about rather freely without taking due care as to what exactly they represent, or whether they always represent the same things.

So we have to face our first difficulty, because nobody has yet produced an entirely satisfactory definition either of psychology or of religion. It would widen our field to an impossible extent if we were to try to include all the forms and phases in which religion has, historically and prehistorically, expressed itself, or even all those in which it expresses itself to-day. The historical development of religion is, of course, of extreme interest and importance psychologically, but bearing in mind the limited purpose we have in view, and because I venture to hope that the value of these lectures, if any, will be practical rather than academic, we shall confine

ourselves mainly to consideration of the Christian religion, which after all, and to say the least of it, is sufficiently widespread and important to make its psychological relationships a matter of some interest, apart from any more personal considerations. To give us a starting-point therefore, I suggest that by religion we mean a personal and practical relationship with what is believed to be a Supreme Being, and the attitude to life which that relationship leads to, and that by psychology we mean the study of mental life and mental processes.

These are admittedly inadequate definitions, but the ideas embodied in them must at least be included in any more perfect definitions, and even taking them as they stand, it is at once manifest that psychology cannot possibly cover the whole of religion; it cannot claim to explain it fully, still less to prove or disprove its ultimate validity. Religion is, or is claimed to be, a reaction of man to something outside himself, in his environment, and while psychology can say a good deal about man, or a part of man, it can say nothing final about his environment: that is not its business. The psychology of religion is the study of the mental processes of a man who is religious, and it is a perfectly proper and legitimate study, because whatever the origins of religion may be, we must assume, in fact we must affirm, that religious mental states and processes will be subject to the same

conditions and laws, and will have the same essential characteristics, as any other mental states and processes, and will therefore be part of the subject-matter of psychology. It should not be necessary nowadays to add the reminder that science is concerned with facts which can be in some way observed, and their assumption, so far as may be, under generalisations which we call, sometimes too readily, laws. It is not at all concerned with ultimate questions of meaning and value, but there are still those who, since science has explained so much that was formerly unknown, are inclined to push it too far, even to the conclusion that scientific truth is the only sort of truth there is. The way of escape from that dangerous attitude is to seek a philosophic standpoint which, while it cannot contradict scientific fact, can place it in a wider setting and in some sort of relation to the meaning of life.

A great Scottish theologian once said : " It is of the nature of faith that it should be tried. If there were not appearances against it, it would not be faith, it would be sight." A religion which can be fully and completely explained and comprehended, of which the breadth and length and depth and height can be fitted into the compass of the finite and limited mind of man, is not a religion worth having. Needless to say, that does not mean that a man should neglect or sacrifice his intellect in his religion. On the contrary, he must use it to the utmost,

if only because it is right and important that he should be able to give a reason for the faith that is in him, but there will always be room and need for wonder and humility and faith, for by these things men live.

There will thus always be some sort of questioning or criticism of religion on intellectual or scientific grounds, and it will take varying forms. In our day its form is largely psychological, because there is hardly any other branch of knowledge in which there has been so much revolution and progress during the last thirty years, so many new discoveries made and such a variety of new theories produced. It is essentially the same process which you see in those older criticisms of religion which were based on new discoveries in astronomy or archæology or geology or zoology, all of which, incidentally, religion has not merely withstood but actually turned to profit, with a strange sort of persistent vitality.

But while each criticism of religion as it comes naturally seems to the generation immediately concerned to be peculiarly important or dangerous, so that " challenges " and " crises " and even " final breakdowns " become, so to speak, chronic, the psychological criticism certainly does go further in its own way than those which were based on facts of history or astronomy or evolution. Because psychology is not concerned with what you might call the external facts of religion, but with that part of

a man by which he apprehends and experiences religion, or claims that he does so, and those who seek to attack religion on psychological grounds take a rather more subtle line than the older critics. They do not so much deny as explain, and they do not so much explain as explain away. They do not flatly say that the religious man is mistaken, they rather say, with a pitying sort of superiority, that he is deceived, which is, of course, much more irritating. And they annoy him most particularly in that they say he is deceived about the one thing he did think—quite wrongly—he knew something about, his own mind. We do not so much object to being told that we do not know anything about history or astronomy or zoology—some of us would admit quite readily that that was true—but when we are told that we do not know the meaning of our own thoughts and feelings, the thing becomes a personal insult, and we have to sit up and take notice. I think that is perhaps why there is so much interest in this whole matter even on the part of people who are not themselves conspicuously religious at all. It is as if they felt—and they are quite right—that it is not so much religion which is being criticised as humanity, for being religious. Humanity *is* religious, there is no doubt about that. However we may try to account for it, religious beliefs and attitudes are a great human fact which cannot be ignored, but must be accepted and taken seriously by any psychology

which claims to be at all comprehensive or complete in its study of mental life.

2. Psychological Factors in Belief.

Religion expresses itself in various ways. We may regard it as a system of beliefs, as involving certain emotional states, and as leading to certain types of behaviour, and the relative emphasis on these elements, what you believe, how you feel, and what you do, varies much in different people and in different forms of religion. But clearly psychology comes in all the time, whether in believing, or feeling, or doing. If we ask how the mind comes to concern itself with religion at all, how religious ideas come to exist in it, there are those who will be inclined to say that religion comes by a revelation from God, by His Spirit speaking in the human heart. That may be one way of stating a truth, but it is not the sort of way or the sort of truth that psychology knows anything about. It is similar to the statement that God gives us our daily bread. That also may be a truth, but when you sit down at table and lift the cover, you know perfectly well that you will not see manna, or even quails. You will see some quite ordinary food which has gone through many and various processes of growth and manufacture and cookery, and which is in its present edible and palatable condition on your table as the result of the working of natural processes and the labours of a great many

different people, and which has been bought, and perhaps paid for, with good money earned by hard work. Yet you may still thank God for your dinner. We must try to keep quite clear in our minds the distinction between theological doctrines and psychological processes. They may supplement each other and they need not contradict each other, but they each have their own scope and sphere of validity. If, then, we look at the matter from the human side, that is to say the scientific and psychological side, we may specify three main ways by which religious ideas and beliefs come to exist in the mind, and we may discuss them briefly in turn.

I. First, there is Tradition. Beliefs, of course, are not inherited as such, but the child naturally tends to adopt the beliefs current in his family or other environment, and these become a well-established part of his mental furnishing long before his critical faculty is sufficiently well-developed to act upon them, so well-established as to be almost beyond any criticism. He accepts them by the psychological process of suggestion. We define suggestion as a process resulting in the acceptance and realisation of an idea in the absence of adequate logical grounds, and suggestion has a much wider influence in all mental life, and therefore in religion, than we are apt to think or perhaps like to think. It is, of course, a normal and valuable influence in all education, but suggestibility is essentially characteristic of an undeveloped mind. When

I say that an idea is accepted by suggestion without logical grounds I do not mean that the idea itself has no such basis. That may or may not be the case, but so far as the subject of suggestion is concerned it is irrelevant. The most incontrovertible truth and the most fantastic nonsense may be accepted under the influence of suggestion with equal absence of intellectual criticism, and therefore the fact that a belief is accepted by suggestion has nothing to do with the inherent truth or falsity of what is believed. That is another matter, with which psychology as such has no concern.

II. Second, there is Experience, which can be subdivided for descriptive purposes into three classes: experience of nature, of moral conflict, and of emotional states.

1. Experience of nature, beliefs based on experience of the outside world, what is sometimes called natural religion, appeals strongly to some minds. From the beauty and order and beneficence which appear in nature, there is postulated a Being in whom these attributes exist supremely. The facts of nature which would tend to oppose these things, the ugly and disorderly and unpleasant facts, have to be excluded or ignored, and there is thus a dualism. Neither is there in natural religion itself any ground for confidence that the good side will ultimately prevail; that is derived from other sources.

2. The experience of moral conflict. For our

present purpose it does not matter what the moral law really is, whether it is the result of suggestion or exists in its own right; meantime we simply recognise the experience of conscious mental conflict between " right " and " wrong " as a psychological fact which, while it may exist without any explicit religious belief, tends to lead to such belief. The conflict is objectified and projected and the " good " side is regarded as the will of God. Then further, there is the need for help in the conflict, which leads to the idea of a God able to help. From the psychological point of view that is a wish-fulfilment; if there is a practical necessity that a wish should be realised, the mind is apt to regard what is only a wish as if it were a fact. There again, you see, there is a psychological mechanism at work, which is quite independent of the question whether or not such a God actually does exist. This moral factor is also dualistic, and it leads to a legal sort of religion in which the natural element and the emotional element are apt to be depreciated, a religion of the Puritan type. It raises the question of the psychology of the sense of sin, which we shall have to consider later, and it also raises an even larger question which we shall not discuss, namely whether morality is really the primary concern of religion at all. It has been argued, as you know, that religion is essentially an emotional experience, and that the moral ideal, though perhaps an inevitable adjunct, is secondary and derivative.

3. That leads us to the emotional factor. Part of this is plainly the result of suggestion, as is easily seen in certain conventional types of conversion experience, but there is more in it than that. Religion gives relief from certain painful emotional states—the sense of sinfulness, the feeling of incompleteness or loneliness, uncertainty about the future, sorrows and disappointments in life. The danger here is sentimentality, the feelings of relief and peace being regarded and pursued as ends in themselves, also that a religion based too exclusively on emotion will sooner or later be realised to be intellectually inadequate.

III. We have then Tradition, Experience with its three divisions, and finally the Rational element. Under it we have all the arguments of an intellectual sort which have been produced to " prove " the existence of God—cosmological, ontological, teleological, moral, and so on. The interest of these arguments for our purpose is not their philosophical validity but the fact that they have existed, and the question of how far religious belief is really determined by intellectual processes. There is a strong tendency in modern psychology, as we shall see, to stress the fundamental importance for belief and conduct of feelings and desires, and to regard what are put forward as intellectual arguments or justifications as being only " rationalisations," what *Pooh-Bah* might call " Merely corroborative detail, intended to give intellectual

verisimilitude to an uncriticised and essentially infantile emotional impulse." The proper way to argue with anyone nowadays is to state the emotional grounds on which it is clearly to his interest in some way to hold the view he does, and then dismiss his professed reasons for holding it as "mere rationalisations." That, of course, is easy, far too easy. It is doubtless true that if we have adopted a certain view on emotional grounds we do tend to rationalise experience to fit that view, but in the long run and in the normal mind as experience grows, reason will conquer, because belief is capable of being modified and moulded through experience guided by reason. Rational religion, so-called, is the obvious type for people who are trying to think clearly, but if it becomes too exclusively rational it also has its dangers, which are on the one hand scepticism, and on the other hand a relapse into emotionalism because of the inadequacy of the purely intellectual proofs of the existence of God. From the psychological point of view, belief is not quite a simple matter, and a position which rests on only a part of the whole basis of belief cannot be entirely satisfactory.

That, then, may suffice to indicate the more obvious psychological processes concerned in religious belief, but recent discoveries have suggested that these processes themselves demand some further investigation. The older psychology worked by observation and intro-

spection, and the recognition of the fact that there are very important mental forces and processes which are unconscious, and thus inaccessible to introspection, has rendered the older views decidedly incomplete in certain respects. We must therefore now turn to consider this less accessible part of the mind, because until we have some understanding of the theory of the unconscious we cannot appreciate the real significance of the modern psychological criticism and interpretation of religion.

## CHAPTER II

### FREUD AND JUNG

1. The Conception of the Unconscious.

The theory that there exist processes and states which have all the characteristics of "mentalness," and yet are not in consciousness, and sometimes cannot be made conscious without long and difficult analysis, is immediately justified, or at least entitled to respectful attention, because it fits the facts, and gives an explanation, amazingly coherent and complete, of a whole world of phenomena formerly incomprehensible. Our changing moods, our enthusiasms, our so-called "instinctive" likes and dislikes, our dreams, our fads, our superstitions, our nervous symptoms if we have any—these and many other things find a more or less complete explanation in the theory of the unconscious, and, so far as I know, nowhere else.

I need hardly remind you that the discussion of the unconscious raises a multitude of problems, physiological, psychological, and philosophical, many of which we cannot even mention, but fortunately they do not directly concern us at present. The unconscious is a hypothesis, and I do not see how we can get on without it,

any more than we can get on without the ether, also a hypothesis. My own personal attitude to it as a hypothesis is severely practical. I spend my time dealing with people suffering from various sorts of nervous and mental troubles, and I find in many such cases that by investigation of what I believe to be their unconscious I can often help them to discover what seems to be the cause of their discomfort, and so to regain health and happiness. I have also found that my own mind works in essentially the same way as theirs. Therefore I believe that when we speak of the unconscious we are talking about something that does exist and is very powerful, though what it is or where it is I cannot tell you. It has close relationships with the biological functions of the body, and with the whole evolution of the mind in man. This is not the place to touch the eternal mind-and-body problem, but, as some of you will know, there are those who regard mind in general and the unconscious in particular as explicable entirely in physical or physiological terms. All I need say about that just now is that we must not forget that the explanations of the materialistic physiologists are really every bit as hypothetical as those of the mythologising psychologists.

Take a medical illustration, a case of hysterical or functional paralysis, where the patient is quite unable to move a limb which every possible method of examination shows to be

perfectly healthy. One theory about that is that there is a blockage, a failure in conduction of nerve impulses, in the microscopic intercommunications of certain nerve fibres. It may be so, but nobody has ever demonstrated it. Still, it sounds quite well. Another theory is that there is a morbid repression (I shall explain that phrase later; it does not matter just now) in the patient's unconscious. Again it may be so, but again nobody has ever demonstrated it. But it does not sound quite so well, because nobody ever could demonstrate it in the same definite physical way—the only satisfactory way for some minds—in which the other theory might conceivably be demonstrated. It is possible, it is even probable, that both theories are true; they may simply be saying the same thing in different languages. But on the nerve-block theory the physician, in the present state of our knowledge, is helpless; he does not know of any form of treatment which will clear the line. Whereas on the theory of unconscious repression the physician is by no means helpless, because he can treat the patient by mental methods, and indeed has repeatedly done so, with very gratifying results for all concerned. I maintain therefore, that with our present knowledge and on practical grounds we are quite justified in speaking of the unconscious in terms of mind, but the one thing we must not do is to mix our theories; we will only get into hopeless confusion, as Dr Bernard Hart

remarks, if we try to talk about " ideas " and " brain cells " in the same sentence. We must also remember carefully the limitations of language and the dangers of metaphor. We speak, for example, of " regions " or " levels " in the mind, we may even draw diagrams of it—one well-known book about the unconscious has a diagram of the mind which is not so very unlike one of Heath Robinson's most extravagantly complicated drawings—and our thinking is so bound up with words that we are apt to be misled into a false sense of precision and definiteness. Still, we have, I think, a good deal of knowledge which is scientifically certain, and which, as I said, is vindicated, because in actual experience it works.

You are aware that while what used to be called the subliminal or subconscious part of the mind has been spoken of with more or less precision and detail by various writers for many years, indeed for centuries, the man who really put the unconscious on its feet, so to speak, as a scientific conception, is Professor Freud of Vienna. There is no doubt that Freud is a great genius, whose influence on psychology will certainly mark an epoch, whatever may be the ultimate fate of some of his more extreme theories. But geniuses are apt to have the defects of their qualities, and the commonest of these is one-sidedness, not to say fanaticism. We are to be concerned with the application of his theories to religion, but to begin with they

had, of course, nothing at all to do with religion. Freud began, over forty years ago, by trying to treat a hysterical girl, and from that point he has gone right on, and is still going strong, to produce and elaborate doctrines which really involve an entirely new and original philosophy of the universe. I do not mean to suggest that because his work was at first concerned with the abnormal mind his conclusions are not generally valid for the normal, for it is abundantly proved that the basic mental processes are the same in health and in disease. But when a genius, with more than a touch of fanaticism, who has had to contend with bitter opposition and virulent abuse, produces what amounts to a new philosophy of a very revolutionary character, we shall do well to be cautious about swallowing it whole. That, however, must not prevent us from looking at his work as fairly as may be.

## 2. The Theories of Freud.

We may summarise the essential features of Freud's theory of the unconscious under four heads, but first let me beg you to remember the simple and obvious point which so many of the writers on this subject ignore in the most maddening way, namely, that the unconscious is what it says, *un*conscious, NOT conscious. It is not a case of recalling, after a moment's thought, what you were doing on a particular day last week, or the name of your first school teacher,

things which you can more or less readily reconstruct or fish up from memory. These are in what is called the pre-conscious or fore-conscious, and they may be important enough, but the true unconscious is much deeper and by no means so easily reached or understood.

I. First of all, then, the unconscious, according to Freud, is largely the result of the process called Repression. Repression means that certain tendencies or feelings or fancies are kept out of consciousness, refused recognition, because their acceptance as a part of itself would be painful and repugnant to the Ego, that part of the mind which has been modified by its contact with the outside world, and has begun to become civilised, socialised, and moralised. The Ego finds it painful to feel that these things belong to it, it therefore ignores them, and *it does not know that it is doing so*, because the most important and fundamental repression is an unconscious process. (Do remember that point; people constantly fail to grasp it, and get hopelessly befogged thereby.) Repression is also, of course, an inevitable process; as someone has put it, repression is civilisation, because primitive and crude instinctive impulses have got to be repressed if we are to develop socially or intellectually or morally. The most important repressions naturally take place in early childhood when the primitive mind begins to find itself in contact with social standards and demands, but we may observe simple and super-

ficial examples of the same process in ordinary adults every day. If two of your friends have a quarrel, and come separately to tell you about it, you will often notice that their respective accounts of what happened differ, sometimes to a surprising extent. That is not because one or both of them is telling lies, but because they each repress, and therefore quite honestly fail to remember or recognise, the weak points in their own case. Nietzsche put repression in a nutshell. "'That have I done,' says my memory. 'That have I not done,' says my pride, and remains inexorable. Finally memory yields." And the point is that memory yields completely, so that I can say with perfect sincerity, though not with truth, "I did not do it"—or wish, or feel, or imagine it, as the case may be.

We must be quite clear that repression is an entirely different thing from ordinary forgetting, which occurs through lapse of time or lack of attention, though some cases of apparently ordinary forgetting are not quite so ordinary when we come to examine them closely. It is even more important to recognise that repression is not a deliberate conscious effort to push a painful memory out of consciousness. That can sometimes happen—though, as we all know, it is difficult—but it is not true repression. The conscious process is sometimes called *suppression* to mark the distinction. (And some years ago, when people seemed to be getting

agreed about terminology, a very eminent psychologist wrote an important book, which had a large circulation, in which he explicitly and deliberately defined repression as the conscious process and suppression as the unconscious one. No wonder psychology is hard to understand.)

Not only is true repression unconscious, but the motive of it is also unconscious, the real reason why this or that has been repressed. There is what has been called a dissociation, a splitting off of a part of consciousness from the main body, which is illustrated in its extreme form in cases of double or alternating personality, which sometimes occur in real life as well as in the classical fictional example of Jekyll and Hyde. When Jekyll is conscious Hyde is unconscious, and Hyde may be anything from a quite limited set of feelings or ideas, a single complex, as it is called, to a more or less complete secondary personality.

Some repressed material has once been conscious, some—often the most important—has never been fully conscious at all. A good illustration of that, which will be appreciated by any students of dentistry who may be present, is the case of an unerupted impacted wisdom tooth. Some of the most difficult operations in that grim profession are concerned with those cases, which occasionally occur, where you find a tooth which has all the properties of ordinary teeth, including the capacity for causing trouble through infection and decay, except that it is

not visible in the mouth at all, never having come through the gum to the surface. Similarly there is material in the unconscious which has all the characteristics of mental material except that it is not, and has never been, conscious. It likewise may cause serious trouble, and to deal with it effectively may require a difficult psychological operation. The recognition and treatment of such cases is of course a matter for the expert, and for him alone, but let me give you one or two simpler instances. (I make no apology for spending so much time on repression, because if we can get a clear understanding of it, which is far from being universal, the rest will be comparatively easy, and if we do not understand it clearly we shall not get much further.)

I think I have only once failed to keep a professional appointment through completely "forgetting" it. The engagement was on my list for 5.30; I had seen it and thought about it earlier in the day, yet after tea I had the impression that my work was finished, and I went out. Shortly after 6, while still out, I suddenly remembered about the patient, who had come an hour's train journey to see me and had to leave for her return train at 6.30, so that our interview was restricted to a few minutes. She knew all about repression, and promptly charged me with having lost interest in her case. I was bound to admit that she was right, and we agreed, in the most friendly way, to stop

treatment. She was, in fact, a rather troublesome and unsatisfactory case, and, though consciously I had been trying to do my best for her, my unconscious wish not to be bothered with her any longer was able to overcome my sense of professional duty, my consideration for a lady and a patient, my ordinarily quite good memory, my desire to earn a fee, and the evidence of my appointment-book, and I thus "forgot" the engagement. That would not have happened if the case had been a new or interesting or favourable one.

Let me give you another example, going a little deeper. A patient had had three or four quite satisfactory and pleasant interviews with me, and then rang up late one night to say that he must see me immediately. He came, and began without preamble to abuse me in the most violent and fluent language. Cruel, brutal, hypocritical, swindler, were some of his milder accusations. I let him get it all off his chest, and then said that as the hour was now very late we would go further into the matter next morning. Which we did, when it did not take him long to discover that his resentment was directed, not against me personally, as he had felt on the previous night, but against an individual of whom, by the psychological process known as transference, I had become the representative to his unconscious, namely his own father. Since very early childhood he had repressed feelings of anger and hatred against

his father, never allowing them to enter consciousness, because it is very wrong to hate one's father. Their expression and recognition *via* me gave him immense relief and illumination at once.

One more example, from that supreme psychological text-book the scriptures of the Old Testament. You remember how, after David had done a very contemptible thing in the matter of the wife of Uriah the Hittite, the prophet Nathan came and told him the story of the rich man with many flocks and herds who took the poor man's one ewe lamb. David was extremely angry with the rich man, condemning him to death out of hand, but he completely failed to see, until Nathan quietly remarked " *Thou* art the man," that the story was an exact picture of his own conduct. He repressed the memory of it and the guilt of it, and gained a measure of relief—as we all do—by being angry with his own fault when he saw it in someone else.

So much then, meantime, for repression.

II. The unconscious is dynamic ; there is a force behind it which is constantly striving for expression. That force is bound up with the energy of the primitive instincts, and Freud calls its tendencies " wishes," which I think is rather unfortunate, because it has led people to think of them as comparable in all respects to ordinary conscious wishes, which is by no means usually the case, as we shall see later.

(In this connection we may note that Freud associates with the term "instinct" a much wider scope, more constant activity and more varied forms of expression than it usually signifies. M'Dougall, for example, regards instinct as much more specific and limited both in the duration and the direction of its action.) That conception of a *force* in the unconscious is extremely important, and it is really the dynamic idea in Freud's theories, almost more than anything else about them, which has made them so vitalising to psychological thought. Perhaps you have heard people speak of the unconscious as a cesspool, a collection of stagnant filth. I hope we shall realise later on that it is not filthy, and it is most certainly not stagnant. It is essentially active, it is always moving, and it is often positively volcanic.

III. The unconscious is primitive and infantile in character, and it remains so, being uneducable. It is illogical, it does not reason or follow the laws of sequence and logic to which we are accustomed in ordinary conscious thought. It expresses itself therefore in primitive ways, that is to say by pictures and analogies and symbols which sometimes seem fantastic and far-fetched to the educated consciousness, as is illustrated by those productions of the unconscious which we call dreams ; and on the other hand it expresses itself through the body, as is illustrated by certain kinds of nervous symptoms. This infantile quality of the unconscious is also

very important, because it means that there is something in us all which does not want to grow up. Certain aspects of it are immortally dramatised in *Peter Pan*, and while we enjoy the fantasy and humour and beauty of that play we may remember that its deeper significance is something very serious, even tragic, from the point of view of real life. (More than any other modern dramatist, Barrie lets his unconscious, which he has called M'Connachie, write his plays for him, which is one reason for their peculiar appeal and fascination. *Mary Rose* is an even better example.) *Peter* does not want to grow, he does not want to work, he will slay pirates in fantasy but will not go to school to fit himself for the real fights of life. And he also fails to make a sexual adaptation. He is fond of *Wendy*, but, to her disappointment, he wants her as a mother and in no other capacity ; he can love only as a child, not as a man. In the unconscious there is always a pull back from reality and from growth, back ultimately to the sheltered and irresponsible omnipotence of the child in his mother's arms, even, Freud says, in his mother's womb. (Remember that I am speaking just now of the Freudian theory ; there are those, as we shall see, who hold that that is by no means the whole story, that the unconscious has also a much more positive and constructive function.)

IV. The unconscious according to Freud is largely, though not exclusively, sexual in

character. It is of course on this point that he has been most vehemently attacked, and we may observe how he defends himself. Firstly, he says that by the word " sexual " he does not mean what you mean, the ordinary physical attraction and activities of a conscious, adult kind, and anyone who reads Freudian literature should in fairness bear that in mind. He extends the meaning of the term to what does seem an almost unjustifiable degree, making it cover nearly everything which can be included under either pleasure or love, and he regards sex as not simply a physical impulse, but as a psychic force; he speaks of " psycho-sexuality ". Secondly, he says that it is only to be expected that we should find a great deal of sexual material in the unconscious, because of all instincts, however many or few you like to specify, there is none which is at once so powerful and so subject to social and moral restriction, and therefore to psychological repression, as this one. We cannot deny that there is truth in that contention. Thirdly, Freud says that the opposition to his sexual theories is largely due to the fact that his critics, like most civilised people, are themselves suffering from sexual repressions and are therefore unable to appreciate his point of view. That of course is an unanswerable sort of argument, and I think that it is at least partially true ; in the case of some of the critics it is quite obviously true. But if anyone says to you that it is your repressions which prevent

you from seeing his point of view, you can always reply that it is *his* repressions which prevent him from seeing *your* point of view. Psychology has thus furnished us with a new method of personal abuse, but it does not take us very much further.

But let us at least be fair, for at this point some of the critics are really not fair; they apparently make no effort to understand what the man is saying. Take for instance his theory of infantile sexuality, that sex—not adult sex, but something directly and inseparably related to it—is an active force from the very earliest years of life. (Active, I said, not necessarily conscious.) It is very easy to say that to associate sexuality with a little child is absurd and revolting, and that is so, if by sexuality you mean the immoral tendencies of a depraved adult, which is what some people seem to mean by it. But, as I have indicated, that is not what Freud means by it, and in any case a moment's thought, not to speak of a little observation of real children, would show that the sex impulses do not and cannot appear suddenly out of nothing at adolescence. They must have a history, and like every other human tendency they exist in the child in an immature and embryonic form which, like any other embryo, may not much resemble the adult form it will one day assume, and which has to pass through various developmental stages before it reaches maturity. Freud has shown convincingly

that there are various more or less distinct components, some of them unconscious (though sex in young children is often very far from being so unconscious as is usually taken for granted), which are only gradually fused and harmonised to form the adult impulse in all its manifold physical and psychological expressions, and any difficulties or inequalities or delays in that very complicated developmental process may have very far-reaching effects on an individual's psychological adaptations to life, on his efficiency and on his happiness. Because sex in its wider significance is of such supreme importance for the whole emotional life. There is no doubt that Freud's recognition and demonstration of that fact has been of great value, and there is also no doubt that many even of his more revolutionary and unpopular conclusions have much truth in them. But while his sexual theories find remarkable confirmation in many cases, I cannot but agree to some extent with those who assert that they have been pushed too far, speculation has been accepted as demonstration, and Freud's one-sidedness has definitely hampered his progress, besides leading to prejudiced antagonism among his critics and bigotry among his followers.

Before going further, I must mention very briefly a conception which Freud has recently developed in his psycho-analytic theory, the conception of what he calls the Super-ego. We know that very early in life there takes place

the formation of an ego-ideal, as it is called, towards which the individual more or less consciously strives, and which is in the first place an identification of himself with his parents, or their substitutes. This ego-ideal is of course a necessary and very valuable aid to development, and much has been written about that aspect of it. But the super-ego as Freud conceives it is not quite so simple. To begin with, he finds that it is essentially unconscious, different from—and opposed to—the primitive unconscious resulting from repression, but still unconscious in the sense that it cannot be brought fully into consciousness. And it is not only, or even chiefly, an identification with the parents as an ideal to be followed, but also as an authority-exercising, condemning force. There are some things Daddy does, imitation of which is desirable and praiseworthy, such as being kind to Mother and always having clean hands and nice manners, but there are other things he does, such as sitting up late and reading grown-up books, imitation of which is forbidden and discouraged.

It is the natural tendency of the infantile mind to idealise or exaggerate. Every child has at first an idea of his father which, fortunately, is not true to reality, and just as his wisdom, his strength, his wealth, appear boundless, so is the other side, the authority and the sense of inferiority and guilt which it tends to produce in the child, exaggerated too. Just as some

people have a super-ego which, though they do not know it, makes them aim at being not a 100 per cent man but a 250 per cent man (which of course means that they are following not reality but fantasy), so they may have a super-ego the demands of which are intolerably hard and the severity of which is incredibly fierce. Normally it is, so to speak, grown up to and modified and fitted into reality, and is the psychological basis—or organ, if you like—of what we call conscience, but it may remain in the unconscious as an uncriticised, authoritative, condemning principle which produces a morbid exaggeration or caricature of a healthy conscience, and leads to that uncomprehended sense of inferiority and inadequacy and guilt which poisons the life of so many people, and is due to a conflict, *both* sides of which are unconscious, between the primitive impulses and the super-ego. Let me quote Freud's own words. "Although it is amenable to every later influence, it preserves throughout life the character given to it by its derivation from the father-complex, namely the capacity to stand apart from the ego and to rule it. . . . As the child was once compelled to obey its parents, so the ego submits to the categorical imperative pronounced by its super-ego. . . . From the point of view of morality, the control and restriction of instinct, it may be said of the primitive unconscious that it is totally non-moral, of the ego that it strives to be moral, and of the super-ego that it can be

hypermoral and then becomes as ruthless as only the primitive unconscious can be." (Any medicals or others present who have had to do with a case of what is called obsessional neurosis will appreciate the terrific power which the super-ego can exert in the production of morbid fear or guilt.) That is all I can say here about a theory which, though it is rather complicated and not yet very coherent, does seem to be grasping something very real and important.

That then may serve as a very sketchy outline of the fundamental points in Freud's theory of the unconscious, in which there is, beyond all doubt, a great deal of truth. It is a part of the mind where there are powerful forces which are denied direct expression, but which can yet influence thought and feeling and conduct. That is the practical point, that not only in nervous invalids but in every one of us, unconscious motives are always at work. We know that the movement of the tides in the sea depends on the attraction of the moon, but the tides move just the same, more or less, whether we see a full moon in the sky, or a half moon, or just a little crescent, or no moon at all, because, of course, the unilluminated part of the moon acts as powerfully as the part we may happen to be able to see at any particular time. In the same way, the obvious conscious mental state is never the whole story; the unconscious force, the unconscious motive, is

the central point of modern psychological theory.

But, as we shall see, that does not at all imply that the unconscious is what I might call the deciding factor. In my house in Glasgow there is a water-tap which I can turn on or off with two fingers, but which is in direct connection with Loch Katrine, thirty miles away among the hills, and in a real sense I can thus control and use that great mass of water. I cannot live at all without Loch Katrine, and I must see that all the arrangements which give me control of it are in good order, otherwise the loch will control me, by flooding the house. We can no more get on without the energy of the unconscious than a ship can move without engines. If the unconscious were always and inevitably opposed to the conscious we should all be nervous wrecks, to say the least of it. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways, that is to say, he is neurotic, but in the single-minded there is a measure of harmony between conscious and unconscious, and they, from the psychological point of view, are the pure in heart.

One might say a good deal in criticism of the details of Freudian theories, but for our purpose it is sufficient to say that he is too one-sided, too strictly in bondage to the reductive method, tending to bring everything back to the primitive, the concrete, and usually the sexual. There are many cases, far more than some people care to admit, where the reductive

principle is quite essential for any full understanding, but it is often painfully inadequate, both from the theoretical point of view, as ignoring some of the greatest things in life, and on the practical side, because after you have taken something to bits to see how it works you may find it extremely difficult to put the bits together again. Very often you will seem to have lost something. If you have a piece of furniture made of a mosaic of carved woods, you may analyse it and be able to tell all the different sorts of wood and the various tools by which each mark was made, but when you come to reconstruct you will find that you have lost something ; you have lost the glue. You have lost that which by its effect on every part cemented them together into a complete whole. You have also lost unity and purpose and beauty. On the other hand, nobody will make a beautiful mosaic who does not understand the properties of the different woods or the uses of the different tools.

It is unquestionably true that much of the opposition to Freud is due to ignorance and prejudice and misunderstanding, it is also true that the logical validity of some of his arguments is open to grave objection, but there are deeper reasons than these. We rebel inevitably against any theory which so minimises spiritual values and which makes the primitive and the physical, whether conscious or unconscious, pre-eminent over the reasonable and aspiring elements in

humanity. Reason and intelligence are perhaps less supreme than some of us like to think, but they are not so entirely negligible and delusive as Freud would imply. The whole tendency of his theories, if pushed to their conclusions, is to arrange all mental phenomena under the force which rules most strongly in the animal world—sex, and to depreciate all those attributes which we most distinctively associate with humanity. He is the greatest of all pessimists, and we feel that some of his more extreme conclusions are so intolerable that they *must* be false.

But are we being so unscientific as to make pleasantness or tolerableness a test of truth? Are we just repeating the error of our grandfathers, who tried to deny the truth of the discoveries of Darwin and his followers merely because they were afraid of them and did not like them? Have we got that most futile of all fears, a fear of truth, than which there is nothing more contrary alike to the spirit of science and to the spirit of real religion? That is a danger against which we must always be on our guard in this matter as in other departments of thought. On the other hand, we must recognise that some of the newer psychological theories are being pushed further than is legitimate, out of science into philosophy; they are being used not simply to account for facts, but to explain and put a value on the meaning of life. Any scientific theory which leads to

a less worthy view of human life or a lessened sense of responsibility for the conduct of life is self-condemned. But while that may be so, if a scientist, psychologist or any other, has founded a bad theory on certain facts, the thing to do is not to damn his theory and ignore his facts, but to leave his theory to find its level or its fate through time and experience, and to found a better theory on the same facts, if you can. Freud has written a small book called *The Future of an Illusion*. The illusion is religion, and its future, according to him, is not of much account. None of his scientific discoveries entitle him to say anything final about religion, but that must never blind us to the psychological facts which he has discovered and which must be looked at and dealt with honestly, remembering always how easily we may be misled by our own preconceptions and prejudices and repressions. The immense value and importance of Freud's amazing pioneer work remains unique, if we are able to look at it open-mindedly and to distinguish, as some among his followers as well as among his critics fail to do, between his genuine discoveries and his unsupported theories and speculations

3. The Standpoint of Jung.

There have been various splits and secessions in the Freudian school (each new schism of course claiming to be a development, whereas Freud speaks of them all as " retreating from "

his position), but the most important one, and the only one which I propose to discuss, is that headed by Dr Jung of Zurich. Jung began as one of Freud's leading disciples but has now diverged from him very considerably, though still retaining many of his basic ideas and a good deal of his terminology and technique. Their differences are somewhat radical, and it is quite a mistake to bracket Freud and Jung together, as is so often done, as if they were just twin criminals like Burke and Hare, or different names for the same devil like Satan and Beelzebub.

Jung has reached a conception of the unconscious which, to some, is in many ways more satisfactory than that of Freud, wider, more flexible, more vital, but therefore also more difficult and more intangible. For one thing, Jung is not out to establish a rigid psychological determinism, he has room for will and choice. He is not so purely reductive, he looks forwards as well as backwards, and he recognises, in a way that Freud does not seem to do, that psychology is not and never can be a science like physics, because it is dealing with life, and with life in its highest manifestations. He believes that while infantile repression is certainly important the cause of unconscious conflict may also be in the present, in a failure to deal adequately with the existing life-situation, a shirking of biological or even spiritual duty. If some obstacle in the present proves too great

to be surmounted, the flow of the life-interest is dammed up and tends to move backwards, there is what he calls Regression (quite a different thing from repression), with the result that outgrown and infantile modes of reaction become reinvested with energy.

I do not know if a practice which was common when I was at school still persists, but in those days some of the more depraved of my schoolfellows used to smoke little rolls of cinnamon bark before they advanced to the more satisfying and expensive cigarette. If I meet an old schoolfellow to-day and find him smoking cinnamon stick instead of Gold Flake I may say that he has regressed, the childish tendency has reasserted itself. But I need not spend time enquiring into the properties of cinnamon stick or the past history of his connection with it, because the practical point is not that he is smoking cinnamon stick, but that he is not smoking tobacco. I hope you see the distinction, because I think it does illustrate one of the differences in standpoint between Freud and Jung. Freud is apt to spend much time investigating cinnamon and cabbage and tea-leaves and rope and any other abomination which has ever been smoked by wicked children in secret or by desperate men in an extremity, whereas Jung wants to know why this grown-up man is not smoking ordinary cigarettes. Is there a tobacco famine, or has he no money, or is he on a desert island, or has he taken a vow, or

what? That is to say, the first question with Jung is not so much what exactly the infantile tendencies are, but why the energy which should be going out into real life has gone back to them at all.

Jung divides the unconscious into two. He calls the unconscious which Freud describes the *personal* unconscious, which is individual and secondary, the result of repression. But behind that, and much more significant, is what he calls the *collective* unconscious, which is universal and primary, that little bit of the common mind of humanity from which each of us has to develop his or her own individuality. In that collective unconscious there lie not only the roots of the primitive instincts, but also a sort of epitome of all mental evolution, with the germs or symbols of all the myths and fantasies and aspirations which have accompanied and directed that evolutionary process. In addition to that, Jung sees in the unconscious not only repressed material but also *nascent* material, which is unconscious not because it is repressed but because it is, so to speak, not yet ripe for consciousness and can therefore be expressed only in symbols. So that unconscious symbols, in dreams and elsewhere, are not always to be taken reductively—which usually means sexually—but may also have a prospective and more abstract significance, and some real relationship to the actual problems of conscious life. Jung makes much, in this

connection, of the idea of rebirth and its symbols —the story of Jonah is a typical example—as expressing the need for, or the achievement of, a new adaptation to some aspect of life.

He by no means denies the extreme importance of sex, but he does not make it quite so central as Freud does, nor does he always take it so literally. He recognises, for instance, that physical sex may itself be a symbol of something abstract and spiritual. There is a type of mind which seems to be in bondage to the concrete, which is unable to recognise abstract or spiritual ideas under physical symbols. When Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again," he gave him a spiritual conception in sexual language, but Nicodemus could not see it, he kept the idea on the literal sexual level, and therefore completely failed to apprehend it. "Can a man enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" One sometimes feels that sort of hopeless misunderstanding in the Freudian point of view.

Jung's handling of the subject of myths and symbols is deeply interesting and suggestive, though sometimes rather hard to follow, and his general standpoint is, to my own mind at least, much more fruitful and vital than Freud's in many respects. He has done much interesting work on psychological types. It would take too long to go into it fully, but it has some bearing on our subject, because different psychological types naturally have different ways of

getting at life and interpreting experience. The extravert, to whom life is primarily adventure and opportunity, who is only happy when he is losing himself in the thick of things, is so different in every way from the extreme introvert, to whom life is essentially a responsibility and a problem, to be dealt with by cautious and detached thought, that, among other differences, the religious apprehension and experience of the one is bound to be very different from that of the other.

Finally, Jung sees in the unconscious a compensating function. If some aspect of life or demand for adaptation is being neglected or depreciated in conscious experience, you will find it emphasised and striving for expression in the unconscious, as if an effort were being made to preserve a balance. Every concavity implies a convexity, and a quite superficial analysis will often show that the man who presents to the outside world and to his own consciousness a shy and retiring inferiority has a big bulge of superiority fantasy in his unconscious.

From that standpoint repression becomes a much wider and more significant process, and what is repressed is not necessarily " evil " at all. If you can have repression of crude sex, for instance, you can also have repression of decency. We must recognise, if we think of it, that the tendency of society is always opposed to extremes ; society cannot tolerate brutes, but

saints are also apt to have trouble. Society once expressed its attitude to two malefactors by crucifying them, but there were three crosses on Calvary. You remember Jeremiah's repression, and how uncomfortable it made him. "I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name; but His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones." (That painful sensation is still quite common. It is sometimes called neuritis and treated by rest and electricity, but they would not have done Jeremiah any good. Neuritis does exist, of course, but so does repression, and the diagnosis between them may be very important.) I have myself seen quite a lot of people who were repressing in the same sort of way as Jeremiah. They were not repressing religion; you cannot speak of "repressed religion," because you are mixing up two different categories of thought. They were repressing tendencies and feelings and capacities in themselves for which religion provides one, if not the only, sufficient outlet and means of satisfaction.

It is hard enough to give a short outline of Freud, and it is even harder in the case of Jung, but I hope that what I have said has given you some sort of idea of what they stand for. Their respective views seem in many ways contradictory and irreconcilable, but that is largely because they are looking at things from different angles, you might almost say they are looking

in opposite directions, Freud mainly backwards, Jung mainly forwards. And I do not want to give the impression that Freud is wrong and Jung right, because it all depends ; they may both be right up to a point. For example, if our friend who smokes cinnamon stick has indulged so freely as to give himself cinnamon poisoning, then in his case the properties of cinnamon are a much more important and urgent subject for investigation than the price of tobacco or the geographical position of his desert island. From the medical point of view, my own experience is that there are some cases which work out like a Freudian diagram to the last detail, but there are others with whom one gets simply nowhere on those lines. (Of course the Freudian answer to that would be that these latter cases happen to have had repressions which I myself also have, and I am therefore unable to understand them. That may be so, but I find that they can be dealt with on other lines, and successfully dealt with, which is what matters most.)

It is true that common salt is the chloride of sodium, a definite chemical compound with certain fixed properties ; it is also true that common salt is a useful preserving and flavouring addition to food, and it depends on the circumstances of the case with any particular sample of that white powder whether you should submit it to chemical analysis or put it on your dinner-plate.

In spite of the important differences which I have tried to indicate, Freud and Jung still have a good deal of agreement on many points, the points which practical experience seems to have established most securely, such as the existence of the unconscious, its dynamic character, the significance of unconscious mental conflict, the fact of repression, and the various means and mechanisms, which we shall come to later, by which the mind attempts to deal with conflict. So I hope it may be possible for us in these lectures, without necessarily calling ourselves whole-hearted adherents of either Freud or Jung, to talk about the unconscious with reasonable consistency and intelligence.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ANALYTIC POINT OF VIEW

1. The Meaning of "Psycho-analysis."

The unconscious has relations with the conscious. The mind contains what are called complexes, systems of ideas and associated feelings centred round some focus. Part of the complex may be on the surface, but the roots of it, and sometimes more than the roots, and often the whole complex, are in the unconscious. You have forces striving against resistance to gain some sort of expression, and you thus get what is accurately enough called intra-psychic conflict, in which at least one side, and often both sides, are unconscious. The existence of the conflict may show itself in various ways which appear in consciousness and can be investigated. It is the investigation of these signs of conflict—fantasies, moods, dreams, mistakes, prejudices, automatic actions, and certain forms of definite mental or bodily illness, which is the basis of what is called psychological analysis, or, if you prefer the term which Freud has, so to speak, patented, and which should therefore be used only by those who follow him fully, psycho-analysis.

By the way, it is very satisfactory that the recently published Report of the committee appointed by the British Medical Association to investigate psycho-analysis has made that point quite clear, and I do wish it were more generally recognised. Nobody is talking about psycho-analysis, or is doing psycho-analysis, properly so called, unless he is concerned precisely and exclusively with the theories and methods laid down by Freud. Nobody is a psycho-analyst, properly so called, unless he has been recognised as competent to practise that method by one of the national Psycho-analytical Societies, which very rightly demand that he shall undergo a long and strict training under their auspices. Jung himself is therefore not a psycho-analyst, as indeed he would be the first to agree. The Report points out that at present there are only about a dozen real psycho-analysts in this country, all of whom live in London.

There are of course many people, of whom I am one, who believe that other methods of psychological investigation and analysis have their value, even though they differ acutely at certain points from the strict Freudian theories and methods, but it is not our business here to discuss the various forms of psychotherapy. All I want to indicate is that the discovery and recognition, by some sort of analysis, of repressed material, is often all that is needed to lead to freedom. As we have seen, much repressed material is infantile and only needs to be seen

from the conscious and adult standpoint to lose the painful significance which led to its original repression. It has remained as painful only because it was not, and could not be, examined. It has been, as it were, packed up and put in the cellar, labelled "Dangerous—Not To Be Touched." The label is still on the package and it takes courage to touch it, but if we do boldly open it out we find that whatever in it may once have seemed dangerous has shrivelled into nothing, that in fact it was only dangerous because, and for so long as, it was *not* touched. It is like a man who is frightened by what appears to be a ghost. The more fear he shows and the faster he runs away, the more persistently will the ghost haunt him, but if he has the courage to walk right up to the ghost and pull off the mask and the white sheet he will find that it is only his young brother, the infantile in himself, and that ghost can never frighten him again.

Of course the only way to get a really adequate understanding of psychological analysis, or to gain a position from which you can fairly criticise it, is first to be analysed yourself and then to analyse other people. I may be professionally snobbish, like all doctors—and most clergymen—but while I recognise that analysis is not only a form of treatment for certain morbid conditions but also a method of psychological investigation and a part of general psychological knowledge, I feel very strongly

that, for the present at least, all those who actually practise the analysis of others in any serious or regular way—which is the only justifiable way—should have a medical qualification. They should have other qualifications, which put no letters after their names, but the medical one is, to my mind, essential. The sort of talk one sometimes hears from certain clergymen, suggesting that what they call suitable persons should practise what they call psychoanalysis as a part of their pastoral work is, in my view, rather unwise, and even dangerous. For one thing, a real analysis may take a very long time and anybody who is doing analysis seriously will not have much time to do anything else, and, more important, a great deal of expert medical knowledge may be necessary for the selection of suitable cases and the rejection of unsuitable ones. Like everything else which is capable of doing much good, psychological analysis can also do much harm, it can be just as dangerous in its own way as knives or drugs can be, if the person who is using them does not know very precisely what he is doing.

A minister once sent me two members of his congregation for analysis, in the hope that I might in that way relieve the moral and religious difficulties from which they appeared to be suffering, and which he had found himself unable to influence. I did not analyse either of them. I advised that one of them should be sent straight to an asylum, because she was

quite insane, and that the other one should be sent straight to a dentist, because he was thoroughly poisoned owing to the unhealthy condition of his teeth. Both of them were quite prepared to talk and be talked to for as long as I liked, but it would have been entirely futile, and it would have prevented the application of the proper treatment.

On the other hand, I cannot overestimate the value for a minister, teacher, parent, anyone who has any responsibility for the minds of others, of the analytic point of view. Cases are not uncommon where a single conversation with someone who understood that point of view might be sufficient to avert the beginnings of what would otherwise develop into a definite and intractable neurotic state. But a general knowledge of psychological principles is one thing and a scientific psychological analysis is quite another thing. It is entirely different from a heart-to-heart talk or a full confession of sins, and the analogy which is sometimes drawn between " psycho-analysis " and the confessional is quite false and misleading. You see that at once if you remember the fundamental distinction which I emphasised at the beginning, pointing out that the unconscious is what it says, *not* conscious. A man cannot possibly confess what is in his unconscious, nor will confession of what is conscious usually reveal what is unconscious, because it is often only after a more or less prolonged and difficult

analysis, with a very special technique, that he comes to have any idea at all of what is in his unconscious. And as I indicated, when unconscious material is eventually brought into consciousness it generally loses, by the conscious recognition, the painful but indefinite sense of guilt which was associated with it.

A man has done something which he knows was wrong—theft, for instance, and he has experienced the morally appropriate emotion of shame and remorse. He goes to the priest and confesses, he receives pardon which he feels he needs, and he has his feelings of shame and regret confirmed and strengthened, so that he will be more determined not to steal again and will be even more unhappy if he ever does so. Another man has done something which he knows was *right*—travelling in a railway carriage, for instance, and he has experienced the quite *inappropriate* emotion of anxiety and dread. He goes to the analyst in order that his feelings about travelling in railway carriages may be, not strengthened, but entirely altered, and he wants to be able to do it again as often and as freely as he likes. It is perfectly true that the confession of known sin, or even of imagined sin, has a definite psychological value for many people, and gives them great mental relief and peace ; it may very well be that the progress of a psychological analysis will lead to the recognition of moral failures, and moral attitudes may be an important factor in the situation. But

the primary thing in analysis is not moral at all, neither is it conscious ; it is psychological and it is unconscious.

2. Sin and Guilt.

There is a confusion of thought upon this point which will have to be cleared up very thoroughly if psychologists and clergymen are going to come to an understanding. I have heard people talk, for example, of " sin in the unconscious," or " repressed sin." That is the same sort of mistake which I referred to earlier in connection with the relationships of physiology and psychology, quoting Dr Bernard Hart's reminder that we must not mix up " ideas " and " brain cells." " Physiological laws," he says, " must contain no psychological terms, and psychological laws must contain no physiological terms." On just the same principle, we must not mix psychological terms and religious or theological terms, as we do if we speak of " repressed sin." Repression is a psychological process, sin is a theological conception. Somebody who has been listening carefully may remark that I have myself spoken of " repressed *guilt*," and I thank him, because that is exactly the point. Guilt is a subjective emotional state, and as such it is really quite independent of legal or social or theological sin. A man who is found " guilty " by a jury, declared to be a legal sinner, may have no feeling of guilt at all. That may be because he has a defective

moral sense, or because he does not believe that his action in the particular circumstances was wrong, or even—if there has been a miscarriage of justice—because he did not commit the act in question. Yet he is, by the verdict of society, a sinner. On the other hand, as we shall see, there are many people who feel intensely guilty, but who have not sinned in any way whatever against God or man.

Further, if by the unconscious we mean the psychological conception I have tried to outline, it is plainly absurd to speak of "sin in the unconscious," because there is no morality there at all. The only thing that phrase can mean is that there are in the unconscious certain primitive tendencies and impulses which, if they were allowed to enter consciousness unmodified and to express themselves with the full agreement of the ego as deliberate purposes or acts, would then come under the moral or theological category of sin. But that statement cannot fairly be condensed into the shorter one that sin is repressed. A geologist who has found a deposit of ore containing tin or lead cannot say that he has found a collection of false coins. He has found the possibility of false coins, but he will not be arrested as a coiner. (Incidentally, he has also found the possibility of lead pipes or biscuit tins or other useful things.) Even if a man has committed an actual sin, and has by repression completely obliterated the memory of it, the psychological process concerned is one

thing and the moral verdict on the nature of the act is quite another thing. If he then becomes ill in a psychological way, it will not be because of his sin but because of his repression, which, remember, is an unconscious process, and occurs not because the act was religiously sinful but because the man was psychologically uncomfortable, because there was mental conflict, and mental conflict may occur quite irrespective of sin.

We must avoid the mistaken view held, or implied, by some, that there is any essential connection between neurotic illness and sin. Neurotic illness is common enough in all conscience, but if it were as common as sin things would indeed be in a bad way. Neurosis is frequently related to sin for precisely the same reason that it is frequently related to family life, to love affairs, to business worries, to money, and so on, that reason being of course that mental conflict may easily arise in connection with any of these big common interests of human life, and it is mental conflict which causes neurotic illness.

In former days there was a phrase in use, even by some medical men, which illustrated the same confusion of thought. They spoke of " religious insanity " in cases where the patient's delusions had a religious colouring. (Some people, quite reasonably, used the supposed existence of that disorder as a serious argument against religion.) It is now recognised, of

course, that there is no such condition, any more than there is "financial insanity," although many insane persons believe that they have become paupers and others that they are millionaires. I recently had a patient who was a dispensing chemist, and who developed a morbid fear that he would make a mistake in his dispensing and poison somebody. Obviously that was the sort of fear he might be expected to develop because he worked with poisons, and if he had been, say, a barber or a manufacturer of explosives his fear would have been, not of poisoning, but of wounding or shooting. Similarly, a man who is or has been interested in religion may express his nervous symptoms in religious terms. That is to say, the particular form of neurotic symptoms may be quite incidental and will depend on the patient's conscious or unconscious interests. The real problem in every case is why there is mental conflict and that will always be a purely psychological problem.

It is an interesting and significant fact that your real thorough-going blackguard is rarely neurotic. Neurotics as a class are characteristically too moral, morbidly moral, whether consciously or—more usually—unconsciously. They are in the large majority of cases much more moral than the average, which is why it is monstrously unjust, besides being psychologically crude, to assume hastily that every neurotic is struggling with conscious unconfessed

sin, or if he is, as may sometimes be the case, that that is the whole story. There are a large number of extremely miserable sinners, as they might call themselves, who really need, not a priest, but an analyst.

### 3. Psychology and the Work of the Church.

The plain fact remains that psychological medicine demands a special technical training which religion, thank God, does not. By that I mean that it is more possible for a trained medical psychologist to be also a religious man, able to recognise and—at least to some extent—deal with religious problems than it is for a clergyman to be also a trained medical psychologist, able to recognise and deal with neurotic symptoms. I know well that there are some physicians who by their excessively materialistic preconceptions, and their ignorance and ignoring of psychological and spiritual factors, are to that extent inadequately equipped for work of this kind. I know, likewise, that there are some clergymen who are similarly and not less seriously hampered by religious and moral preconceptions, and, if I may say so, by a certain narrowness and limitation of experience and outlook. I am also well and thankfully aware that there are some clergymen who have a remarkable knowledge of medical psychology added to great natural gifts of intuition and

sympathy, who recognise, for example, that neurotic and even insane ideas may present themselves under the guise of religious and moral difficulties, and who are doing much valuable work in those cases, which of course are not uncommon, where genuine moral difficulties are a central fact in the situation. But some of them seem to forget that religion is not a sort of advanced psychology, but something essentially different. It may be desirable that at certain points psychology should pass over into religion, but when it does so it ceases—for better or worse—to be psychology in the proper sense of the word. Many cases described as having been treated by " psycho-analysis " have not been analysed in any technical sense at all. They have not needed it. Their difficulty has been wholly on the conscious level, and entirely within the sphere of ordinary pastoral work.

In my humble opinion the general principle remains that when a case presents itself demanding for its proper handling a knowledge both of religion and of medical psychology, or of medicine in general, a properly qualified physician—which does not mean every physician—is the person best fitted at least to diagnose, even if not to treat it. He can decide, as the clergyman cannot possibly do, whether or not there is any bodily or mental disease present, as there might quite well be even though the patient's conscious complaints were expressed

entirely in religious terms, and that decision is obviously a first necessity in every case. The ideal of course is co-operation, but my own experience has been that neither the doctors nor the clergy are as willing and able to trust each other as they should be, and some day, I hope, will be.

There is one more thing I want to say seriously and emphatically on this point. It is agreed that there are many cases where the spheres of physicians and ministers may overlap, but there is some very important psychological work to be done in a matter where there can be no such overlapping, where the work can be done only by ministers, and the ministers do not seem to be making very rapid progress in doing it. I mean the psychological study and overhauling, in the light of our present knowledge, of the doctrines and attitudes and practices of organised religion. The books on pastoral psychology say very little about that ; it does not seem to come into the subject. That is as if a book on enteric fever, with many accounts of illustrative cases, were to say nothing at all about the importance of efficient drainage systems or clean milk or methods of quarantine. It is sadly true, as I think any experienced psychotherapist would agree, that for one patient who is ill because of his actual sins or moral difficulties there are ten—or twice ten—who are ill because of fears and repressions and twisted emotional lives which are partly or even wholly the result of

wrong or stereotyped or meaningless religious ideas absorbed by them or impressed on them in early life, and still retaining their power even though they may have been consciously repudiated.

The public health administrator or the research worker, who never sees an actual patient, may do great work for medicine. In the same way, if ministers will get together and examine honestly, not so much what they themselves believe, but what is actually being taught, explicitly and implicitly, to children in homes and Sunday-schools, and what is often being offered to adolescents; if they will then demand that the Church shall really and finally scrap a great deal of her lumber of various kinds and revise her doctrines and ideals in view of the fuller knowledge we now possess of the nature of man and the will of God; if they will realise that while genuine religion may often be a factor in the cure of neurotic illness ecclesiasticism can do, and has done, a great deal to cause it, they will find a large and difficult, but supremely important, field for work before them. It will not be such interesting and stimulating and dramatic work as dealing with individuals, it will be hard and dull and often extremely unpopular in some quarters, but in the name of psychology and of real religion it has got to be done, and done soon, and the ministers are the only people who can do it. They will, after all, be following the example of Jesus, who, though

he discriminated as they also must, had at times a very definite and summary way of dealing with the things which were said and done by "them of old time."

I wonder if ministers realise how many excellent people to-day are—to the great loss of all concerned—simply and deliberately refusing to think, to use their minds, about religion, because they cannot see how to square their early ideas, their loyalty to parents and teachers, their vague fears of the wrath of God towards unbelievers, and some of the doctrines which, rightly or wrongly, they suppose the Church to hold as fundamental, with their own observation of the world as it is and with such scientific and psychological knowledge as they may possess. The fact that people can say, as many have said to me, "I can talk like this to you because you are not a minister," may not mean that either the people or the ministers are at fault, but it does mean that the Church is at fault. Ministers know quite well, of course, that they are charged with preaching what they do not believe, and not preaching what they do believe, and remaining silent on matters which they say are irrelevant or unimportant but which are by no means so to many of their hearers. I need not help them to refute such charges, though I know very well that they are often quite groundless and unfair, but the matter goes rather deeper than that.

Take one example. The Church of Scotland

holds as what is called its subordinate standard of faith—subordinate to the Bible, that is—the Westminster Confession of Faith, which was produced in 1648. It is a great document and has meant a great deal—and a great deal of good—for religion in Scotland, but its theology and psychology are, to put it very mildly, quite out of date in certain important respects. Naturally and inevitably so, for if the Church does not know more about God and man in 1929 than it did in 1648—let alone any earlier dates—then either the Church or God is dead. The Church of Scotland recognised this, but instead of dealing frankly with the situation it passed what was called the Declaratory Act, allowing ministers and office-bearers when subscribing to the Confession—as they must do—to retain a measure of liberty in their private interpretation of it. A minister once remarked to me that the Declaratory Act would enable him to accept the Koran as a "subordinate standard." Now that sort of thing is psychologically quite hopeless and tragic, whatever it may be theologically or morally, and unfortunately it is only one example, and not the worst. It is no use to say that the old creeds and practices do not matter and may be ignored, because the fact remains that these things are there, part of the official organisation of the Church, and their capacity for doing psychological harm cannot be denied or neglected. I do not for a moment suggest that everything

that is old is bad or unnecessary ; there is much to be said even on psychological grounds for historic continuity and the conservation of experience and order and discipline and so on. But I do suggest that the Church has not yet considered and reconsidered these things as she ought to do in view of modern psychological knowledge and the psychological needs of her members, especially her young members.

Let me illustrate what I mean by the example of surgery. Many of you know that the preparations for a surgical operation take a far longer time than the operation itself, and are in a very real way the most important part of the whole business. Every part of any properly managed operating theatre and every object in it—instruments, drugs, dressings, furniture, walls and floor, not to mention doctors and nurses—everything is scrupulously examined and cleaned and prepared, whether or not it is going to be used for this or that particular case, because you never know what may be needed or how infection may be carried. No surgeon will willingly operate in a theatre with cobwebs on the walls. But there are some cobwebs on the walls of the Church. If the Church is really going to accept psychology at all, as some of her representatives are apparently so anxious to do, she must be consistent about it. She must see to it that what I might call her background and her furniture are psychologically

healthy and harmless, just as the furniture of a surgical theatre is clean and free from infection. Otherwise she runs grave risks when she touches a sensitive human spirit. *All* the furniture—doctrine and dogma, ritual and ordinances, creeds and confessions.

That does not mean that the Church should have no furniture at all. There is a tendency in some quarters to say that a man can be a good Christian without bothering about doctrines or dogmas, but the clergy would, I hope, be the first to agree that that can be pushed much too far, and that a man must be able to love the Lord his God with all his mind. Nor does it mean that the Church should simply substitute another set of rules and beliefs and practices as cut and dried as the old ones. It means the spirit of honesty and freedom and progress which is the spirit of Christ. Not in theory or platitude—there is plenty of that, and not only in individuals—thank heaven there are plenty of them too, but in the actual detailed official life and teaching of the organised Church as a whole.

I hope this long digression does not seem either impertinent or irrelevant. I know from my own experience, both personal and professional, that it is really very closely connected with the questions of individual religious psychology with which we are concerned. Far be it from me to profess to tell ministers what their job is or how they ought to do it, but if I

am to talk honestly about psychology and religion at all I cannot but indicate this aspect of their relationship, which is, as I believe, so extremely important and so seriously neglected.

## CHAPTER IV

### "MENTAL MECHANISMS"

In our survey of the unconscious I hope we have recognised three things. First, the fact that the racial and individual history of the human mind is not dead and done with, but is present and active in all of us. Second, the fact that unconscious motives are real and powerful. Third, the fact and the importance of mental conflict. I want to say a little more about the last of these.

We have seen that—failing a prompt and satisfactory solution on the conscious level—mental conflict is dealt with by repression, also that a certain amount of repression is normal and inevitable. But difficulty may arise if there is too much repression, or if the energy behind the repressed material is so great that it cannot be completely controlled and continues urgently to demand an outlet of some sort. If repressed feelings or impulses will not stay put, as it were, the obvious thing to do is to repress them with a still firmer hand. But that is not always possible, and there are various ways in which the mind seeks to arrive at some sort of a compromise or working arrangement, which will

give a measure of satisfaction to both sides in the conflict and thus provide some degree of mental peace. I have already mentioned one of the commonest of these mental mechanisms, as they are sometimes called, namely Rationalisation, a finding of reasons. I hardly need to illustrate it, as we all do it every day. But remember, rationalisation is not a deliberate making of excuses; it is not conscious hypocrisy. It is an unconscious evasion of the real point at issue by emphasising some fact which, though irrelevant, is perfectly true so far as it goes. The rationaliser simply makes it go too far. When Naaman the Syrian pointed out that Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, were better than all the waters of Israel, he was stating an undeniable geographical truth. Where he went wrong was in relating that fact to the question of washing and being clean, because that was where the blow to his pride came in. Or when Judas said that the ointment might have been sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor, his valuation was probably quite accurate financially, but he was wrong in allowing that fact to cover up the greed which prevented him from seeing any purpose or beauty in what he called "this waste."

Another way of avoiding painful reality is Fantasy, the creation in the mind of a picture or image which by its pleasant nature will compensate for unpleasant reality, and form an escape from it and a substitute for it. Fantasy

may be good or bad ; good if it is in touch with reality and acts as an inspiration, for where there is no vision the people perish ; bad if it leads to self-satisfaction and idleness. The Book of the Revelation, for example, is psychologically nearly all fantasy, and in that same book there is a neat little instance of a dangerous fantasy. " Unto the Church of the Laodiceans write : Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, and *knowest not* that thou are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked."

Then there is Projection, by which we mean the putting out of unconscious feelings or ideas from ourselves on to other objects or persons, and so concealing their true nature and origin. One peculiar blessedness of this mechanism is that it enables us to blame other people for our own faults and failings. The man with a guilty conscience soon begins to feel that other people are viewing him with suspicion, and may end by not feeling guilty at all and blaming them for suspecting and persecuting him, though in reality they know and care nothing about him. Think of the awful weight of agonised feeling that is projected every day on to perfectly good motor engines which have been neglected by their drivers, or perfectly good golf clubs which have been badly handled by their owners.

Then there is Displacement or Transference of Affect, which means that a feeling is transferred from its original object to some other,

more or less related, but in itself neutral. This is well illustrated in many cases of morbid fear. There are many people, as you know, who suffer from quite irrational fears of all sorts of harmless objects or situations. That sort of fear has a perfectly valid cause—and is therefore never to be laughed at—but it is displaced from its real cause because the subject cannot face that cause, which therefore remains unconscious. Freud tells the story of a village blacksmith who had committed a murder. But he was the only blacksmith for miles around, and the authorities decided that he was too valuable a man to lose. It then occurred to them that there were no fewer than three tailors in the village, so, as justice must be satisfied, they hanged one of the tailors.

An important type of this mechanism is seen in the matter of symbols. Men have suffered and died quite cheerfully for a bit of red, white and blue cloth worth a few shillings, because they had displaced on to it for the time being all the feelings of love and patriotism and duty and honour which really belonged to the idea of their country. That type of displacement has, incidentally, a certain religious danger. I once heard a great Scottish preacher, the late Dr Kelman, say, "I hate pain, I hate the Cross, and the worship of it (of *it*) is an unclean idolatry."

Another mechanism is Over-compensation, the over-emphasis in consciousness of the

opposite feeling to that which is active in the unconscious. Some people use prudishness as a defence against repressed sensuality. The people who always speak punctiliously of " ladies " and " gentlemen," when they mean men and women, are usually none too sure about their own social status.

There is one mechanism which does not concern us very much, though it is extremely common in a mild form, and very important from the medical point of view in its more severe forms, namely Conversion, where the mental conflict is translated into the form of bodily symptoms. We all do it in our speech, as when we say we are " fed up " or " sick " about something which has happened. Some people go further, and literally *are* sick.

You have a pretty illustration in the case of Ahab. (I frequently find myself going to the Bible for illustrations, not because it is the Bible, but because its psychology, quite apart from its religion, is so piercingly true to life and so extraordinarily up to date.) Ahab, you ought to remember, wanted to acquire the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. But Naboth politely and bravely declined to sell or barter the inheritance of his fathers. Whereupon, Ahab had a mental conflict. He was not enough of a man and a gentleman to accept the refusal and be done with it ; he was more the spoiled child who wants another child's toy and will not be happy till he gets it. Yet he was not

bold or bad enough to do what he must have known he could do—what his wife eventually did for him—take the vineyard by fraud and force. His psychological instability expressed itself through this mechanism of conversion: "And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased, and laid himself down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread." They probably sent for the court physician and told him that the king was feeling like nothing on earth, and the physician probably said that the king had a touch of neurasthenia from overwork and ought to take a long rest, and gave him a tonic to improve his appetite.

By the way, in connection with what I said about neurosis and sin, consider the case of Ahab's wife Jezebel. You remember with what admirable decision and efficiency she took charge of the situation and carried the affair to a conclusion. She succeeded in repressing completely any moral impulses she may have had, there was no conflict (because it is only when repression is difficult or incomplete that unconscious conflict persists), and therefore—though she was a thoroughly bad lot—she was not in the least neurotic. Wicked, socially and morally undeveloped, yes; but not neurotic. (It is rather interesting to notice how our diagnosis of psychological inadequacy in Ahab is confirmed by the fact that Jezebel's attitude to him is obviously much more that of a mother than of a wife. Her

remarks to him are a nice mixture of scolding and comforting, quite appropriate from a mother to a peevish child, but not the sort of thing any self-respecting man would stand from his wife.)

All these mechanisms have the same object, to disguise the conflict, to relieve the strain of a repression which threatens to become too difficult, and to give some sort of satisfaction to the repressed impulses. That satisfaction is of course quite futile and unreal from the conscious point of view, but it is the unconscious which is demanding satisfaction. In a case, for example, where conversion symptoms are present which produce manifest physical incapacity or pain, we may find that they nevertheless are a gain to the sufferer in that they give him a valid excuse for avoiding some duty or responsibility in real life, or sometimes that they are a punishment which he is inflicting on himself as a necessary atonement for unconscious guilt. In either case, therefore, painful though the symptoms may be, he cannot give up the morbid satisfaction he gains from them until the conflict from which they spring is brought fully into his consciousness.

These mechanisms are all, of course, more or less unsatisfactory and inadequate, and we feel that there ought to be some better way. And so there is, namely the last mechanism I shall mention, Sublimation. That means the expression of primitive and repressed im-

pulses along lines which are related to the original needs but on a higher level; satisfying the impulse, but also socially useful and morally desirable. We shall be considering this process of sublimation in more detail later on.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ELEMENTS OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

THERE is one question which we might ask before we try to apply all this to religion. What sort of person would modern psychology regard as fully developed; has it got any sort of standard or ideal? I think the answer would be that psychological completeness or normality implies freedom from infantile attitudes and repressions by development and sublimation, a self-harmonious and balanced individual, self-reliant and active, with a comfortable and sincere and complete adaptation to reality, to sex, and to society. And next to the inner honesty and self-acceptance which is fundamental, I think the thing psychology would perhaps stress most of all would be independence, the idea that what a man thinks and feels and does must be the real expression of himself as he is and has accepted himself to be; not of a part of him, not of what he imagines himself to be, not of what he has unconsciously or childishly taken at second-hand. Psychology may then say that, so far as it is concerned, anything which prevents a man being like that, which leads to any evasion of the difficulties of psychological

growth and self-realisation, which perpetuates infantile attitudes, or tends to self-deception and encourages undue repression, is false and futile ; and that if, and in so far as, religion acts or is used in that way, then religion is false and futile. That is the position we have now to consider.

### 1. The Nature of Religious Truth.

I wonder if it has occurred to any of you to ask yourselves how far a really scientific or detached examination of religion is possible at all. As we have seen, religion is not merely or mainly an intellectual thing, you cannot get away from the emotional side of it. The only people who really know anything about religion are the people who are themselves religious, and if they are religious then must not anything they say about religion be biased and therefore scientifically suspect, if not definitely invalid ?

That question raises a difficulty which belongs rather to philosophy than to psychology proper —I mean the question of the nature of religious truth, and whether and how far and in what way it is different, and differently reached, from scientific truth. It is therefore rather beyond the scope of our discussion, but I should like to say just a word about it before we get back to our own subject, and in doing so I am borrowing freely from a very suggestive essay by the Master of Balliol. Some of you may at times have felt, in listening to religious discussions, that what was being discussed was

not religion at all, in the sense in which you yourselves have experienced it. When you hear people making the thing a matter of logic and argument, a balancing of probabilities, using phrases like "it is reasonable to suppose that . . .", "we need not be afraid of the argument that . . .", "there is good evidence to support the view that . . .", and so on, the whole business may strike you as having extraordinarily little relevance to your own personal faith, to the things about which you can say "I *know*." It is as if somebody was to spend a lot of time and trouble in trying to prove to a good mother that on the whole, and taking a broad view of all the evidence, she is justified in continuing to believe that she does love her own children. Dr Lindsay tells the story of a Scottish minister who began his prayer thus: "Oh Thou Who art our ultimate hypothesis and our eternal hope." We feel at once the absurd unrelatedness between an experience which finds an eternal hope in God, and any talk about hypotheses; that experience is of a kind and in a region where theories and hypotheses simply have no place at all.

It is obvious enough, when we come to think of it, that all truth is not apprehended in the same way, because all reality is not of the same nature. There are some kinds of truth which can be reduced to a formula or an equation, the meaning of which can be precisely indicated and the validity of which can be tested by a

definite experiment, which can be repeated by anyone who cares to try. The apprehension of that scientific sort of truth is standardised, and is thus made easy. So easy indeed, that we are apt to forget that the truth is not in the formula any more than the music is in the printed score, although we are able, because of this standardisation, to make it our own without having to exercise much or any of the vision and intuition and courage and effort through which it was first discovered. The truth or meaning of a poem or a work of art, on the other hand, is only apprehended in so far as we are able and willing to reproduce in ourselves something of the experience of the poet or the artist, and that is a thing which cannot be put into a formula and standardised, because we cannot say what the meaning of the poem is apart from the poem itself. The Archbishop of York has pointed out the same thing in regard to a drama, in his essay on the meaning of tragedy. " If we can say at the end of a play, ' This play shows us that it is imprudent to steal,' or ' that it is a mistake to treat one's wife as a doll,' then it is a bad play. If anyone asks what Shakespeare meant by *King Lear*, we can only answer by reading the play to him and saying, ' He meant *that*.' " What we learn from it cannot be fitted into any concise and general statement, yet it is truer than any such statement could be. What it gives us is not instruction but illumination, and its meaning is

very individual and personal, because to receive that sort of illumination requires a certain attitude of mind and a certain quite definite effort of imagination and purpose.

Whether we like it or not, there are kinds of truth which can only be grasped and made one's own in that way. We cannot gain them by cultivating a spirit of scientific detachment or what is called an open mind—which is sometimes perilously like a vacant mind. The only way to apprehend religious truth of any ultimate sort is to be willing to fulfil the conditions under which alone we may experience it. Jesus said, "Anyone who chooses to do His Will will understand whether my teaching comes from God." That deliberate choice, with all it involves, comes first, and the understanding can only come afterwards. And it has to be done really and sincerely. You cannot say to yourself, "Let us suppose, for experimental purposes, that I have decided to do the Will of God; I shall then probably feel so and so." You will have to be utterly genuine about it.

After all, even in science there is clearly seen, in a measure, the same demand for a discipline before truth can be reached. Anyone who uses a scientific instrument for the first time, a microscope or a telescope, sees all that the greatest expert sees, but it takes a long period of hard training and honest effort before he is able to apprehend the truth that he sees. Scientific truth, that is to say, can only be

reached by the fulfilment of conditions which are quite inescapable, and if we do not choose to fulfil them we shall not reach it. Similarly, religious truth has its conditions too ; they are different, but they are equally inexorable.

We want to know the truth about God, for example. Well, religion claims that the pure in heart shall see God, and therefore it is their views about Him, and only theirs, which deserve attention. We want to be sure that we are really in touch with spiritual truth. The supreme teacher and exponent of spiritual truth said that people would know the truth and it would make them free, *if* they continued in his word and were his disciples in deed. We are in a different world from science, but you see the principles are quite parallel, and it is no use for anyone to say that he will not accept the conditions, that they beg the question, that he is going to be free from all prejudice either way. One would be inclined to ask such a critic if he is willing to step over a cliff without any prejudice either way about gravitation. In neither case can he escape from the nature of things, and the nature of things has been settled, for better or worse, independently of his views. He must try in some measure to follow after goodness and beauty and spiritual realities in general before he can gain any real knowledge of them ; whether he likes it or not, that is how these things are reached.

The same principle holds in other matters as

well as in religion. I may criticise a picture or an orchestra, but unless I have accepted the conditions of understanding in these matters, and fitted myself by training and experience to appreciate their scale of values and the kind of truth they express, my opinion will be worth very little, to myself or anyone else. (Curiously enough, an apparent exception to this principle is found in the case of psychological analysis. Criticisms of it by such people as ear specialists, journalists, anatomists, religious cranks and others, have been freely expressed, and have been taken with absurd seriousness by many people who ought to know better.)

Needless to say, all this does not mean that one sort of truth can contradict another sort; on the contrary, laziness or hypocrisy in one region of our efforts after truth will react on the others, and, as we have seen, we dare not neglect or violate our intellect in religion. Science cannot give us religious truth, but that does not mean that we can afford to be as unscientific as we like when we are dealing with religion. An understanding of grammar and spelling is not irrelevant for a poet, nor a knowledge of the properties of canvas and pigments for an artist. The deepest and most ineffable spiritual experiences which man can have, whatever their primary origin may be, must pass through and express themselves in that same human mind of his which is so inseparably related to his body and to his whole personal

and racial history, which he uses for the conduct of his everyday life, by which he feels his joys and sorrows, and by which he understands that two and two make four. So I hope we may feel that our discussion is neither irrelevant nor irreverent.

## 2. The Meaning of Free Will.

Perhaps we should begin our consideration of religious experience by referring, however superficially, to a very fundamental and difficult problem, which is psychological as well as philosophical, the freedom of the will. It is sometimes claimed that modern psychology has finally destroyed the illusion of free will and established an inclusive psychological determinism. As every physical event is the one and only possible result of its antecedents, so, we are told, every thought and feeling and act is the inevitable and only possible result of the preceding psychological situation. Think of a number ; you may imagine that you choose one at liberty, but it can be proved, if you analyse deep enough, that you really could not have chosen any other number than the one you mention, that in fact you did not choose at all in any real sense of the term ; there are definite reasons why the particular number you finally utter is the only possible one, even if you change it in the last half-second before you speak. Well, I do not think that experiments

of that kind need distress anybody, because in a case like that one would be quite indifferent, and would, so to speak, let his unconscious choose for him. His unconscious has no free will, and I can well believe, indeed I have often proved for myself, that the reasons for one number rather than another being named can be discovered, and the choice shown to depend on definite psychological factors. But, as Browning says, " When the fight begins within himself a man's worth something." When big things are at stake, when spiritual issues are concerned, when it is not a matter of choosing a number in a game but of choosing this day whom ye will serve, it is quite another story. You cannot even then discount the effect of previous choices, the relative values which a man's past history will inevitably place on the considerations for or against his present choice, but there is more in it than that, and well we know it. Some of us can remember occasions when we have known the better and chosen—*chosen*—the worse, and we have said, as King Saul did at a time when he was extremely sane, " I have played the fool." And if anyone had tried to tell us then that it was really not our fault because of our psychological determinism, we would have felt it as a treachery and an insult to our humanity.

Free will is said to be an illusion. One of the arguments in favour of free will would seem to be the persistence and the necessity of that

illusion. There have been other illusions in human history, universal and respectable and durable illusions, such as that the sun went round the earth. But when at last these were proved to be illusions, what happened ? Nothing whatever ; everything went on just as usual. Can you conceive what would happen if free will were finally proved to be an illusion ? Life as we know it would become simply impossible. Effort and striving, failure and success, rewards and punishments, right and wrong, would lose all meaning. The greatest achievement of humanity, the crown of evolution, is character, and character depends on will. If that goes, everything goes, " earth is darkness at the core, and dust and ashes all that is." An illusion which is the basis and support of the best and biggest things in life is near enough to a fact for us.

I quite admit that we are going beyond science there ; from the strictly scientific standpoint it is a matter of indifference whether dust and ashes are all that is. If it is so, it is so, and that's that. But this is just one of the places where, as I have tried to suggest already, we must go beyond science, not to evade the truth but to reach it. You can carry physical determinism as far as you like because it rests on what we at present believe—though not quite so confidently as formerly—to be immutable laws of the universe, the laws of the conservation and limitation of matter and force. Matter is

limited, but ideas are not. We recognise that in everyday talk ; we speak of the " creations " of an artist, for instance. He does not create the paint or the stone with which he works, but he does create the ideas which he embodies in his medium. It is not a question of modification or transformation, there is a new creation, and creation and determinism—in the ordinary sense of the word—are ultimately incompatible. There is of course a sense in which psychological determinism is true and important, and we do well to remember it, for our simplest habits and ways of thinking depend upon it, but there is no determinism which can finally fetter the creative mind and will of man.

Professor Eddington, in his Swarthmore Lecture entitled *Science and the Unseen World*, which I would urge you all to read, deals effectively with this point when considering the meaning and scope of what we call " laws," and I would like to quote him at length. " To those who have any intimate acquaintance with chemistry and physics, the suggestion that the spiritual world could be ruled by laws of allied character is as preposterous as the suggestion that a nation could be ruled by laws like the laws of grammar. The essential difference which we meet in entering the realm of spirit and mind seems to hang round the word ' ought.' The limitation of natural law to a special domain would be more obvious but for a confusion in our use of the word ' law.' In

human affairs it means a rule, fortified perhaps by incentives and penalties, which may be kept or broken. In science it means a rule which is never broken; we suppose that there is something in the constitution of things which makes its non-fulfilment an impossibility. Thus in the physical world what a body does and what a body ought to do are equivalent, but we are well aware of another domain where they are anything but equivalent. We cannot get away from this distinction; even if religion and morality are dismissed as illusion the word 'ought' still has sway. The laws of logic do not prescribe the way our minds think; they prescribe the way our minds ought to think."

Professor Eddington illustrates the point by reminding us of the fundamental property of thought, that it may be correct or incorrect, whereas the machinery of the brain cannot be anything but correct, in the sense that it works according to natural laws which are unbreakable. If I ask a boy to think of a number, he may say 63 or he may say 65, and it does not matter which, but if I ask him what seven times nine are it does matter which. Yet if he says 65 no natural law has been broken. We have passed over into the domain of the other type of law, which ought to be kept but may be broken. "Dismiss the idea that natural law may swallow up religion; it cannot even tackle the multiplication table single-handed."

### 3. The Sense of Sin.

We have referred a good deal to instincts, and the question is sometimes asked whether there is a religious instinct. The answer, if you want it in a word, must be No. The term instinct is difficult to define, and has been very variously used and abused, but we certainly cannot specify a religious instinct in the same sense that we can specify an instinct of sex or of self-preservation. But I think there is something, quite elemental, which is one main root of religion, and that is the vague sense in every man of being more than he can express, a feeling that in some way his finiteness demands infinity for its completion, a recognition of "good," which must inevitably lead to a sense of obligation. In fact, if there were no innate capacity for the recognition of some sort of "good" and "evil," I do not see how repression itself could happen as it does. If, when you speak of a religious instinct, you simply mean that the root, or part of the root, of religion is something primary and irreducible in the human mind, then there *is* a religious instinct, something as ultimate, and as unprovable, as the sense of beauty. Call it a sense of obligation, a feeling of incompleteness, the numinous element, or anything else you like, but it is there, and no serious psychological study can ignore it.

It is one of the roots of religion, and in particular it is the root of what many people

would call the essential religious experience, the sense of sin. It seems to me that nothing which can be argued from the psychological standpoint can affect the reality of the sense of sin. We may not hold our grandfathers' views of what sin is or means, of what it involves or of how it is to be dealt with, but when we look honestly at our own lives, after we have said all there is to say about freedom and broad-mindedness and self-expression and unconscious motives and the super-ego and psychological determinism and so on, we know that there have been occasions when, in our sober senses, we have deliberately done what the best part of us knew we ought not to have done, and we know that we cannot get away from that "ought." Our choice has been free between a good and a less good, and we have chosen the less good, and therein we have sinned. And not merely against some arbitrary rule or social convention, but against something, whether in ourselves or beyond ourselves, far higher and more significant than that. If that experience means nothing of an ultimate sort, if it doesn't—somehow—matter, then nothing in earth or heaven means or matters anything at all.

But having said so much, we must fully recognise that there is nothing more common than a sense of sin which is artificial and morbid. Where you have excessive repression or unsuccessful repression, the result in consciousness is very often a feeling of guilt, and because the

true source and origin of that feeling is unconscious the guilt comes to be attached to something which deserves no guilt; and for the same reason it gains a sort of repetitive character which is thoroughly morbid, in just the same way as the repressed fears of "shell-shock" soldiers continued to produce symptoms for months or years after they were safely back at home.

You probably know that one of the common delusions in the form of insanity known as melancholia is that of having committed unpardonable sin, yet no melancholic patient can ever tell you what precisely the unpardonable sin is, or even what they themselves have done. You find exactly the same thing in a less marked form in neurotic patients. I had one patient who added to her modest income by making and selling various fancy articles, leatherwork, painted china, cushion covers and so on, which she did very well. She told me that on one occasion she had taken a great deal of trouble over a painted cushion cover, the design of which included a bunch of grapes. After the article was finished and ready for sale, it occurred to her that wine was made from grapes, and that if she sold the thing the purchaser would see the grapes, think of wine, and take to drink. She felt extremely guilty for having produced anything with such dangerous potentialities, and forthwith destroyed it. That case illustrates very clearly the distinction I have tried to draw between a psychological sense of

guilt and theological sin. She felt extremely guilty, but she had not sinned at all. She thought she had, but she was not in a position to decide—though she was quite impervious to any argument on the point, whereas she is the only person who can decide whether or not she feels guilty. This lady was in other ways a perfectly sane and ordinary member of society, but she had " religious difficulties." In the newspaper which she read, some pious person caused a text from the Bible to be inserted each day among the advertisements on the front page, and she developed a compulsive idea that she *must* always read that text, otherwise she would be severely punished by God. If she ever tried, as she often did, not to read it, she found the phrase " Damn God " repeating itself in her mind, and she had no rest till she went and read the text. She went to her minister because she felt that she was sinful, and he, very wisely, if I may say so, sent her to me.

Though she was by no means insane, that sort of thing is obviously pathological, but you will frequently find, in people who are by all standards perfectly normal, a rigidity, a legalism, an artificial scrupulosity, which spoils their freedom and happiness and hampers their development, though they do not realise it. People in whom what they call their tender conscience, on which they may rather pride themselves, is not at all the voice of God in their hearts, but the result of early repressions

and evasions, or of hypersuggestible and uncritical submission to external standards and ideals imposed upon them, and never intelligently and honestly faced and examined by their own independent personality. I have heard of people who were said to be too good to live, but I have seen a great many who were too good—which in this case means too timid—to think. Freud has said some curious things about religion, but he has said one thing which is painfully true in this connection and in others. "Where questions of religion are concerned, people are guilty of every possible kind of insincerity and intellectual misdemeanour." It is not always their fault; it is often their psychological misfortune, due to the causes I have mentioned, but there it is. And of course it does not touch the question of the reality of sin. The fact that there are false gods does not mean that there is no true God, and the fact that what is called a sense of sin may in some cases be nothing but a nervous symptom does not mean that there is no such thing as sin or a real and significant sense of sin.

# CHAPTER VI

## REPRESSION AND RELIGION

### 1. Repression and Restraint.

I want to say something more about repression and its connection with religion. We have seen that it is a necessary and inevitable process, but that excessive repression is psychologically bad because its maintenance makes a heavy demand on nervous energy, prevents the full expression of the personality, and leads to a state of tension which is painful in itself and may sooner or later lead to a more or less definite and obvious breakdown of psychological adaptation. Repression is not at all the same thing as self-control, because self-control implies self-knowledge, and knowledge is only reached through pain, and excessive repression is an effort to avoid pain. For example, in the face of a conflict between an instinctive impulse and some moral demand, it is of no use to say, "This is not me at all, I am not the sort of person who would do that kind of thing, I couldn't think of it." When Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan," he meant, "Begone!", but some people try to shove Satan behind their back or below the seat, and pretend he

isn't there. That is repression, and it is bad because you cannot afford to have Satan at your back; you never know what he will be up to. You have to face the thing and get right down to it, until you come to realise, "Yes, this is me all right, I am exactly the sort of person who could do it, and in a way I do want to do it, but, by the grace of God" (or by whatever other motive you like), "I am not going to do it." That is not repression, that is a moral victory, and it is likewise psychologically sound and healthy.

If that is so, then we have to recognise that certain kinds of religious teaching are by no means psychologically sound and healthy. Modern psychology has made the conception of the devil much less useful than it formerly was. It was so easy, so hypocritical, so fatal to moral honesty and moral progress, to put all the blame on poor old Satan. And I hope you will not misunderstand me if I say that there is a real sense in which it is psychologically wrong and impossible to say, "I lay my sins on Jesus." I should be the last to deny the supreme significance of Jesus in relation to sin, but the old mechanical and legal ideas of sin, in regard to both Jesus and Satan were, or at least were apt to be made, psychologically inadequate and morally degrading. If you are to put all the guilt on Jesus and all the blame on Satan, where do *you* come in? You have projected your conflict outside yourself, learning

and gaining nothing from it. Even Paul recognised that danger, and wrote the 6th chapter of Romans about it, but it still survives.

You see, you cannot afford to let a thing go out of your mind, by handing it over to someone else or in any other way, until you have mastered it and understood it. There may be a room in your house which you have no further need of, and which you decide to close up. By all means, but before you finally lock the door you must be very sure that you know exactly what, if anything, you are leaving in that room, and you must see that you have not left the gas burning, otherwise you will get a bill later on which will surprise you. Some of you will know a little poem by that very acute psychologist Rudyard Kipling, called "The Rabbi's Song," in which this verse occurs :—

> Let nothing linger after, no whimpering ghost remain
> In wall or beam or rafter, of any hate or pain.
> Cleanse and call home thy spirit, deny her leave to cast
> On aught thy heirs inherit the shadow of her past.

"Cleanse and call home thy spirit." Does that mean that we are to forgive our own sins? Yes, we must. A sense of right and wrong is one thing, a sense of guilt which is allowed to persist and re-echo till it becomes morbid is quite another thing. It is a profound psychological truth that there is no use in crying over spilt milk. But that is not the whole story.

Kipling knows better than to stop there, and his last verse is a quotation of the wise woman of Tekoah.

> Our lives, our tears as water are spilled upon the ground,
> God giveth no man quarter, yet God a means hath found,
> Though faith and hope have vanished and even love grows dim,
> A means whereby His banished be not expelled from Him.

I believe in the forgiveness of sins; I believe in it as a religious fact, and I believe in it also as a psychological necessity.

We must remember further, that repression implies a failure, not to do something, but to recognise something, and the opposite of repression is thus not expression but recognition. Once the recognition is gained, expression of some sort may or may not be desirable, but the psychological danger of excessive repression is past, and the matter becomes one of conscious synthesis and adaptation, at least so far as moral behaviour is concerned, though there is more to be said on the psychological side, as we shall see when we discuss sublimation. But I hope that point is clear, because there is apt to be some confusion over it, due partly to the fact that the word repression is not always used in its proper technical sense. The self-controlled person is consciously restraining some tendency

which he knows to exist in himself, and the expression of which he regards as socially or morally undesirable. The person who is repressing in the strict sense of the term has unconsciously split off from his consciousness some impulse or desire or memory or fear, so completely that he does not know it exists, or that he is repressing it. We have all done that since infancy, and by sublimation we are able to gain expression of the energy of most of the repressed material in ways which our consciousness and society can accept, and are able—unconsciously—to keep the residue repressed without suffering strain.

But if that satisfactory result does not happen, if the tension between repressed material and repressing force becomes too great, and if by analysis or otherwise the repression is laid bare, what will that mean in the subject's conscious life? It all depends on the nature, and what I might call the level, or the age, of the repression. Very often it will not mean that the subject will do anything different at all, though he will certainly be happier and healthier and more efficient. In the case of that patient who was repressing infantile hatred of his father, for instance, the discovery of that repression did not mean that he began to hate his father consciously and to express his feeling by acts of violence. On the contrary, having exploded the hatred on me and having recognised it and its source and its infantile and illogical character,

not only were the nervous symptoms, due to its repression, relieved, but his conscious attitude to his father became much less strained and more friendly. He no longer needed to be unconsciously on his guard lest the hatred—which had now vanished—should come into consciousness. He also recognised that he had really nothing about which to feel guilty, and nothing to restrain. Or take the case of those people—both men and women—who are repressing all consciousness of sex, and consequently hampering their satisfactory emotional development and losing much of the interest and beauty of human life and, incidentally, of religion. That may be due to the fact that, owing to some psychological difficulty in their early development, sex for them represents an unconscious desire for something infantile or perverted—that and nothing more. If the repression is removed and they are thus enabled to grow up to the real meaning of sex, to apprehend its spiritual and sacramental significances, to accept it, and to associate it with ideal values, their moral standards will not be lowered, but infinitely raised, they will not be limited and fettered by repression, but restrained and constrained by an ideal.

I find it difficult to make this business of repression clear without going much further into technicalities than is possible here, but I hope you have at least grasped the essential distinction between the unconscious psycho-

logical process of repression and the conscious moral process of restraint. They are different processes and they are dealing with different things. Uninformed and malignant critics sometimes represent "the psycho-analysts," who emphasise the danger of *repression*, as saying that there must be no *restraint*, we must accept the facts of our nature, express our individuality, and so on, implying the practical abolition of moral values and of sin and of the need for controlled and socialised conduct. That is, of course, absurdly unfair and untrue, for if I have been talking sense at all it is manifest from what I have said already that modern psychology does not by any means abolish sin. On the contrary, it shows in some ways more vividly than ever the danger and subtlety of sin. It certainly tends to alter the emphasis in regard to the nature and meaning of sin, but it does so in just the same way that Jesus did, though the Pharisees of his day and of ours do not agree. That is, it regards external acts as less important than inner motives and attitudes. Pride, which will not face humiliating facts ; hypocrisy, which puts appearance before reality ; cowardice, which will not face conflict ; selfishness, which seeks to remain on a childish level and will not rise to social responsibilities ; fear of emotion, which is the refusal of love ; these are all psychological sins, scientifically recognised as signs of imperfect development. And from the religious side, are not these the very sort of

sins which most of all tend to alienate us from the life of God ?

Further, there are perfectly good reasons, sin or no sin, why mere licence is not the way to relieve the strain of excessive repression. If, as I suggested, you can indeed have repression at both ends of the moral scale, you would, by going in for licence, simply substitute one set of repressions for another, so that you would be as bad as ever psychologically and a good deal worse morally. (And of course you could not deliberately turn a psychological somersault like that in any case because, as you are probably tired of hearing, repression is an unconscious process, and cannot be carried out to order.)

## 2. Analysis and Self-knowledge.

I should like to digress for a moment here. Some of you may be inclined to ask whether all this implies that everybody ought to be analysed. By no manner of means ; a healthy and efficient individual has no more need to concern himself with the deeper aspects of his unconscious than with the complex chemical processes of his digestion. In that matter all he does is to use ordinary care and common sense about his diet, and his digestion goes on all the better for not being interfered with.

A friend of mine recently remarked, not entirely in jest, that psychology appeared to consist in telling us that things are not what

they seem. Even apart from religion, can we ever really trust our own motives or be sure that we are not being led, or misled, by our unconscious, or being less efficient than we might be owing to a burden of repression to which some accident of life will one day add the last straw which will break us ? One thing to be said about that is that some people regard their unconscious, if not as the devil, at least as something apart from and different from themselves. They are rather afraid of it, they keep it at a distance as if they were ashamed of it, they neither know it nor want to know it, forgetting that their unconscious is still them, and a vital part of them.

You see the same sort of artificial separation, more justifiable, no doubt, in the way we speak of our bodies as if they were something apart from us. " I could run faster if my legs were longer." No ; if your legs were longer you would not be you, you would be another person whose legs were longer than yours, so that *you* could not run any faster. We must accept our unconscious and, in a measure, get to know it, whereby of course to that extent it ceases to be unconscious, and fortunately the part of it which can most readily cause confusion of motives in ordinary life is the part we can most easily gain some knowledge of, if only we will be honest. I mean those repressions which are the most recent and, as it were, nearest to the surface.

I am not contradicting what I said a moment ago, I am not advising you all to be analysed, I am only saying that we must not be afraid of ourselves, or afraid to be honest with ourselves. The knowledge which that attitude will give us means two things at least ; a wider and humbler and more independent outlook, and a new power by contact with the reservoir of energy which is in us all and by a more complete harmonising of all the elements in our personality. Because accepting ourselves does not mean accepting only our capacity for evil, but also our capacity—hitherto perhaps unrecognised or undervalued—for good. Mock modesty is just as bad as false pride.

Even if—as of course is true—we cannot know all the unconscious factors which enter into our conscious experience and motives, we can at least do more than we sometimes do to test them. We can be ready to recognise fear or greed or conventionality or self-interest or fantasy, we can consider what in us our actions are going to satisfy, and where they are going to lead us. We can ask whether our subjective experience, religious or otherwise, fits in with what we know to be true, whether it helps us to understand reality better, whether it can be used and applied in real life. After all, the fact that we have got through life so far and so comparatively well as we have done indicates that life itself has analysed us to some extent, and that we have been willing to be analysed,

and we may expect that process—which is of course the normal process—to continue, if and in so far as we continue to be willing.

Consider the story of Jacob. He lived in the days when names meant something, and he was named Supplanter. He deceived his brother Esau, and his father Isaac, and his uncle Laban, and he succeeded in amassing considerable wealth by methods not entirely above suspicion. But eventually, as is apt to happen, his past began to come back on him, the "ghosts of hate and pain" which he had never faced, represented by his brother Esau and four hundred men with him; and at Peniel Jacob, who—like a good many other people—had been running away from himself for a long time, turned at bay. He wrestled all night with something immeasurable in himself, and after a long struggle he got down to rock bottom. "What is thy name—what is thy real character?" "And he said"—past all excuses and evasions—"I am Jacob—a twister." And then, no futile regrets or morbid guilt, but immediate freedom and new power, "no more Jacob, but Israel—a prince of God." That is a story from a religious book, but I mention it here because, quite apart from any question of religion at all, it illustrates so aptly how a frank and merciless honesty, with no sentimentality or grovelling about it, is the foundation of psychological harmony and efficiency. And let me repeat emphatically that contact with the deeper parts

of your own personality does not simply mean calling yourself a rotter, recognising the possibility—or actuality—of evil in yourself; it equally means recognising the possibility of good. Self-knowledge is a psychological duty, it is not a moral inquisition; and it is not until we know ourselves in some degree as we are that religion can have the chance to exercise the power claimed for it to make us something different.

### 3. The Encouragement of Repression by Religion.

Now to come back after that digression to the question of repression in religion. We must admit that there have been, and still are, forms and interpretations of the Christian religion which tend to encourage a repression and a suppression which is morbid and excessive. They do so because their conception of God is infantile and their standard of morality to some extent artificial and narrow and unnatural, based far too much on fear. What happens is that in the name of religion that development of human personality which is the real goal of religion is thwarted and hampered to a very grievous extent.

Look for a moment at the wonderful psychological symbolism of the story of the garden of Eden. Eden is childhood, absolute dependence, complete protection and safety, no work, no responsibility, no sex, and that ignorance which

is sometimes miscalled innocence. The story represents man as growing up, showing the signs which are inevitably and rightly characteristic of adolescence. I have heard the question which is put into the mouth of the serpent in the story spoken of as a type of subtle temptation and irreverent blasphemy, but it is the question which adolescence *must* ask, with reverence and urgency, if either individuality or religion is to have any meaning : " Yea, hath God said ? " There is a desire for knowledge, " a tree to be desired to make one wise " ; the acceptance of sex, " they knew that they were naked " ; the recognition of the duty of work, " in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." And all that, all those necessary and beneficent signs of growth, is what the Church has called the Fall of Man. Desire for knowledge is a sin ; sex is not to be mentioned—" who told thee that thou wast naked " ; and good honest work is—a punishment ! Growing up, in short, is Original Sin, and that vital force in us which urges us out into life and prevents us from slipping back into childhood is the flaming sword of the wrath of God. The necessity for postulating a Fall has been argued on various grounds, but surely we may say that if there ever was a Fall it was certainly something very different from this.

Somebody at once points out that we have a fuller revelation and a better understanding of God nowadays. Doubtless, but has that better

understanding gone nearly far enough into the official and organised religious life of our day, especially in connection with the teaching of children at an age when both religious impressions and psychological repressions are so vitally important; or is there, even in our enlightened age, a real danger of religion, wrongly interpreted and understood, becoming an instrument of morbid repression? As I have indicated, I think that danger exists, and that something will have to be done about it.

Those who seek to discredit religion on the ground that it encourages excessive repression are unfortunately not quite without justification. I will venture to say that Paul himself is not entirely blameless in the matter, however commentators may explain away the things he said about women and about the body for instance; and the monks and ascetics and our own reforming and Puritan forefathers all helped, in spite of their greatness, to make things worse. Jesus had, and has, nothing to do with it. To condemn a potentially valuable thing working wrongly, to quench the smoking flax, is pagan morality, and that is not his way, how much less to condemn a thing before it has had a chance to work at all. The others, whatever they may have said, did in practice incline to the idea that the physical nature and instincts of man are in themselves essentially and irredeemably evil, and that the only right thing to do is to beat them down and, so far as may be, obliterate

them. But the instincts, even in their most crude expression, are in themselves neither good nor bad; they are not only neutral and non-moral, but necessary, because they represent the ultimate source of the whole vital energy of the organism. A thing which is not conscious, let alone self-conscious, cannot be anything but morally neutral. All the great literature of the world was written with a pen, but so were all the filthy books and all the forged cheques.

The real danger of excessive repression is not only that it may cause psychological discomfort and strain, more or less acute, but that it prevents sublimation, because the instinctive energy must be accepted and available before it can be transformed and expressed on a higher level. There are some people who are so afraid that their instincts may make them do wrong that they cannot make available the energy—derived from those same instincts—for doing anything right. They are like a man with paper securities worth £100 in his pocket, but no available funds to pay his bus fare. If somebody gives you a fierce-looking young bulldog, you must train it, and you can train it, to be a pleasant companion and a useful protector, but you will never train it if you keep it locked up in the cellar in case it should make a row or do some damage or bite somebody. Instinctive energy must be fluid capital, not merely there, but there for use, and usable. That is the deep psychological reason for the inevitable condemnation of the

man with the one talent, who was so afraid that he might make a mess of things. He had his one chance of doing something useful with his money, but because he had heard that instincts were dangerous or sinful—that is to say, in terms of the parable, that some men wasted money on drink or gambling, and some made bad investments, he said to himself "Safety first, I'll do nothing," and thereby damned himself. Proceeding, of course, to rationalise by blaming the unfairness and austerity of his master.

### 4. Sublimation.

Sublimation is the normal and natural means of giving expression and development to instinctive energy, and of making an adequate adaptation to reality and to society. Whether or no you believe in a specific herd instinct, you cannot get away from social demands and ideals. Anyone who is going to be efficient and happy in the world has got to grow out of the self-centredness of his cradle and adjust himself to society and to the universe. And that adaptation is not a forced or passive acquiescence, but a satisfying means of expression for the energy of the personality. It is as true psychologically as religiously that real freedom implies service, and that the highest service is the most perfect freedom, and in its double emphasis on the importance of the individual and of the

social ideal modern psychology is not so very far from the mind of Christ.

We see examples of successful sublimation every day; we ourselves are all more or less successful examples of it. The schoolboy finds an outlet for his pugnacity and self-assertion in competitive games, the unmarried woman takes up child-welfare or nursing, and so on. They do these things consciously of course, whether independently or under guidance, but they do them for their own sakes, because they find them interesting, not thinking about sublimation at all. The actual process of sublimation is essentially unconscious, and here again a lot of people go astray, forgetting that sublimation is not a matter of conscious effort. We simply cannot say, "Dash it all, here is an instinct, I must go away and sublimate it." The acceptance of the instinctive impulse, and the recognition of the need for an outlet, may be conscious, but the sublimation is unconscious, just as eating is conscious, but digestion unconscious—or else uncomfortable and inadequate. And just as one man's meat may be another man's poison, so an activity which is an aid to sublimation for one person may be nothing but a weary effort to another. If a man tells me he plays golf in order to get exercise, I will take care not to play with him. He may need the exercise, and his doctor may rightly have advised him to take up golf for that reason, but unless he likes golf as a game to be played for

its own sake his attitude to it will have a nasty sort of solemnity and self-consciousness about it, and he will not play well enough or often enough to get any fun out of it, or even to get the exercise he needs. I have actually heard the case of the conventional disappointed lover who, after being turned down by the girl, goes away to shoot big game in Central Africa, referred to as an illustration of sublimation of the sexual instinct. I hope I need not say it is nothing of the sort. His expedition to Africa is merely a means of distracting his attention and occupying his interest. As likely as not, such an attempt at distraction or replacement may fail of its aim, whereas sublimation which really is sublimation cannot fail, because it is using precisely the same emotional impulse which was previously being unexpressed or wrongly expressed.

Religion is one great avenue of sublimation, but it is futile to force religion down the throat of a man whose psychological constitution and circumstances are such that the ideal sublimation for him is, say, music. He may be able to get at religion after music or through music, but you must give him the music first, even if it is only jazz, which is, for you, not music at all. Sublimation works best when it is spontaneous and gradual, as in a healthy child. But if there is an unconscious fixation of interest at the instinctive level or a regression to that level, which is maintained by repression in the way

I spoke of, sublimation becomes impossible. The difficulty is like that of the child who is so pleased with the shining new half-crown he got on his birthday that he will not spend it or break into it to buy something he really needs.

You observe that we are now coming in sight of the psychological confirmation of the idea of self-sacrifice, which Jung has emphasised in his treatment of the rebirth symbolism which runs through all mythology and religion. If the adult personality is to develop, if it has to have anything to develop, the infantile, pleasure seeking, egotistic personality must be ruthlessly sacrificed. And it is sometimes not pleasant, but he that loseth that life shall save his real life. So many people linger too long, all their lives perhaps, on the childish level, hankering to get back to Paradise and play with the flowers, sheltered and protected, rather than earn their psychological bread in the sweat of their psychological face, and they try to dodge the angel with the flaming sword, and he gives them a very rough time. Some do succeed, and get their heart's desire, but leanness in their souls, for their paradise is too often inefficiency, or neurotic illness, or even insanity. The alabaster box is very pretty, but if it is kept and treasured for itself alone the ointment will turn rancid. It is only when the box is broken, smashed, that the house and the world is filled with the odour of devotion and service. And that is not

a sermon, though I have heard worse ; it is, as I believe, plain psychological truth.

What we have to do, for ourselves and others, is to provide channels along which sublimation can take place easily and naturally ; and what we find in religion, and supremely in the Christian religion, is a great avenue for sublimation. We have heard of the demand for a moral equivalent of war, the sublimation of pugnacity, and we believe that in the service of the Kingdom of God and the fight of faith that demand can be met. And similarly, there is room in Christianity for all the energies of human nature, sublimated, purified, redeemed. But the path to that ideal is not by repression, for it is only by acceptance of our nature as it is, with sincerity and knowledge and vision, that we can raise it to the divine. That is what the Incarnation has shown for us in a great fact, and pledged for us in a great hope.

# CHAPTER VII

## PSYCHOLOGICAL CRITICISMS

### 1. Religion as a Sublimation.

We now have to meet criticism which says this : " Religion is a device to assist sublimation. Sublimation is of course very desirable and right, but it is all done by the unconscious and there is no need to postulate an external reality and call it God. God is simply a psychological hypothesis, and now that we know how the thing really works we can dispense with that hypothesis." But, as I hope we have realised by now, that sort of talk implies an entirely false conception of the province and scope of psychology. The last word about God is not with psychology, nor with any or all of the other branches of science. Psychology can and does teach us a good deal about how the mind apprehends and deals with the conception of God, but there its function ends. The form which religion assumes is doubtless largely determined by men's personal experience and special cravings, that is, by their psychology, but the ultimate and objective basis, if any, of religion, is another matter.

But there is no need whatever to be ashamed

of the unquestionable fact that sublimation is a large factor in the development of religion. It is quite obvious, for instance, that religion and sex are closely related. Their very phraseology is similar, as you see if you read the writings of some of the mediæval saints, or if you consider how the Song of Solomon got into the Bible. You see another aspect of the relationship in the fact that, broadly and historically speaking, religion has on the whole, and sometimes very emphatically, tended to depreciate sex and to overvalue chastity and what is so often miscalled purity. Much harm has been done, and is being done, by placing the two great emotional forces of life, sex and religion, in a false opposition, and one might say a good deal about it did time permit. On the other hand, those who seek to depreciate religion by saying, " Just sublimation ; is not this the sexual instinct ? " place themselves in the rather dubious company of those who said, " Is not this the carpenter ? " Certainly it was the carpenter, and the whole glory of the thing was precisely that the carpenter was also the Son of God.

For we must not regard sublimation as a mere dodge, a psychological camouflage. That is to make the old and fatal mistake of regarding the origins of things as the final and only real truth about them. I have heard that it used to be argued whether the hen or the egg came first, but surely there could have been no argument as to which was the fullest expression of ultimate

truth, about either hens or eggs. A man's possibilities are an essential part of him; it is the aim and end and highest capacities of anything that really matter. Of course, sublimation will always be limited; there will always be residues which cannot be sublimated, but will remain on the physical level and seek expression there, which they ought to have. We need these things to keep us in touch with human life and to make that life worth living, to give it colour and zest and interest, to help us to keep clear and keen our sense of responsibility, to give us opportunity to control and direct their expression and so, by discipline and effort, to form a character worth having.

## 2. Religion as a Neurosis.

In addition to the criticism which represents religion as a hypothetical fabrication produced by the mind as an aid to sublimation, there is another somewhat different line of attack. I have referred to the psychological process known as projection, the putting out on to some real or imaginary object of attributes which do not belong to it, but are merely representative of the feelings of the subject. In the case of religion the demand is for someone or something external to give the sense of protection and security for which we instinctively crave, and the contention, in its simplest form, is that God is just an objectivation and projection of the

ideas and emotions which the child originally associated with his father, or with his idealistic fantasies of himself. Religion is thus really a perpetuation of the infantile attitude to life and is nothing more than a nervous disease, a confession of weakness and inadequacy which a grown man should scorn.

This point is worth looking at somewhat closely. Psychology says you must be independent and self-sufficient; religion says you must enter the Kingdom as a little child. Which is right? Let us follow the sound principle of defining our terms, and see if we get any help. There is no doubt, to begin with, that religion has not always understood that "little child" to mean what Jesus meant by it. The "little child" of conventional religion is an entirely unreal and inhuman fantasy with which no right-minded human child would associate. I rather doubt if the excited, flushed, untidy, cheeky little kid, whom Jesus called away from his ragging on the edge of the crowd and set him in the midst, would have been allowed to enter any self-respecting Sunday-school till he had been thoroughly washed, combed, dressed, had learned his text, collected his gloves, his hymn-book and his penny, and been made, in short, decidedly uncomfortable and unnatural. The real child has a spirit of enthusiasm, adventure, direct sincerity and simplicity, imagination and wonder, and against such there is no psychological law. He also certainly has dependence.

But what does dependence mean, as we see it, not in a spoiled molly-coddle, but in a healthy child? Does it not mean that he trusts his universe? His universe is small, but he feels that it is friendly and he relies on it. He feels himself as a small part in a larger whole, and he is not too proud to recognise, or rather to take for granted, that he cannot get on without it, that it is higher than himself, and that its will towards him is good. Therefore only within it, and because he depends on it, can he be free.

Now what really is this independence the psychologists speak of? One thing it certainly cannot mean is isolation, therefore it cannot be incompatible with some sort of relationships and adaptations; nobody can be independent of the universe; and as everybody cannot be a dictator, dependence of some sort must come in somewhere. We have seen that the individual has to adapt to society, and that means that he must realise and accept both his individuality in it and his dependence on it. Similarly, as a psychological necessity, he must adapt to the universe, the infinite, God, whatever you like to call the widest range of life and knowledge. The plain fact is that it is by dependence that he grows, because as all growth demands a soil, so growth of individuality demands a background, from which certainly it differentiates itself, but from which also it draws sustenance, and without which individuality would mean nothing. It is not psychology or common sense

but insane megalomania, which imagines that a human soul can be self-sufficient or develop out of itself. Our boat will not sail far if all the breeze we can get is by blowing on the sails.

We called religion, you remember, a personal relationship, and any personal relationship worth the name implies both dependence and freedom. A religion which is a mere matter of obeying a law, either from fear or because it pays, an affair of rewards and punishments, or on the other hand a refuge for laziness or incapacity, is sterile and degrading, with no vitality and no inspiration. The only sort of religion to which psychology could find no objection on that score would be one based not on fear but on love, in which we were called not servants but friends, and where our shelter from the stormy blast was not the restraint of a prison nor the narrow charity of an alms-house, but the freedom of a home. Some people have claimed that such a religion does exist.

To come back for a moment to this projection theory. If, when observing " religious " thought and behaviour, we at the same time knew definitely that there was no God, then projection would be a very good explanation of these things. It is by projection that the savage populates his world with spirits, and it is in that way that we account for the hallucinations and delusions of insane persons. If a man says he hears or sees or feels something which we know is not there, we say that he is projecting

something from his own unconscious and giving it an objective existence which has no validity. But, as we have seen, so far as psychology is concerned there may quite well be a God, and if there is, then talk about projection becomes meaningless, at least so far as the existence of God is concerned. Though we are still left with the fact that men do make their God in their own image, and in so far as psychology reminds us in this way of the possibility and danger of limited and inadequate and perverted conceptions of God, we will do well to give heed to it, because if a man's religion means anything at all to him, his conception of God is bound to have some influence on his ideals and his character. This is one of the places where we see the supreme importance of the objective and the historical element in Christianity. We test our lives by the historic life of Jesus, and we must test our God by his. The God that some people talk a good deal about is tragically unlike the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is said that religion is a neurosis, which means a nervous illness, a more or less definite degree of psychological maladjustment and inadequacy. I have already suggested that there are some so-called religious experiences and emotional states and types of conduct which are obviously more or less neurotic. If I read William James or Starbuck on religious experience, I find myself constantly thinking that

what many of the cases they describe really need is to be taken in hand by a competent psychotherapist; they are manifestly morbid and abnormal. But the point is that these cases do not represent religion at its normal, far less at its best. It is a fact, possibly unfortunate, but certain, that the best and most effective religious experience is usually extremely silent, and it is much more difficult than some people recognise to get records of it for examination. That of course is true of all the most important things in life. For instance, if you base conclusions as to the happiness of the married state on what you read in the papers, you will get an absurdly false impression. The cases of cruelty, desertion, adultery and drunkenness are all published, and the ordinary quiet affectionate, happy homes are not mentioned. Yet they are far more numerous than the others, far more important, far nearer to the real truth. On the other hand, if you try to get your information about marriage by asking a couple who claim to be happily married to state how much they love each other, and why, you will not get much satisfaction. They will either say nothing, or else talk in a way that sounds highly forced and artificial. There are a few people, like the Brownings, who can give their love expression in words which we feel are both sincere and beautiful, but the Brownings are not the only happy couple who ever lived. There are many others quite as happy, who could not write a

line of poetry to save their lives. In the same way, it might possibly be an advantage if all the Lord's people were prophets and psalmists, but the plain fact is that they are not. So we must avoid the danger of allowing religion to be judged in any way by its extravagances or abnormalities. These are apt to be vocal and obtrusive, but the real thing is usually very quiet. Electric light is not better than daylight although a dynamo makes more noise than the dawn.

Further, if religion is a neurosis, then the more neurotic a man is the more apt he will be to believe in God, and the only completely normal people will be the atheists. There is no evidence that this is the case. On the contrary, it is a matter of plain historical fact that religion in its highest manifestations gives not only peace of mind but great and increasing powers of endurance, qualities in which the neurotic is sadly lacking. The time would fail me to tell of those who, through faith, have subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, endured hardness, and have, in fact, changed the world. (That of course does not at all imply that religion as such is the one and only cure for a person who is neurotic. There are many quite irreligious people who are not in the least neurotic, and there are many deeply and sincerely religious people who are highly neurotic. The conclusion being, as I have already suggested, that there is really no

essential connection between religion and neurosis at all.)

Another point in connection with this talk of the perpetuation of infantile ideas is lucidly discussed by Canon Streeter in one of his essays. He points out that man's reaction to the universe is not only intellectual, but also of necessity emotional, and we must not assume, as we are too apt to do, that any reaction which is intellectual is probably or certainly valid, and any emotional reaction apt to be delusive. They are both valid, each in its own category. The intellectual reaction, the growth of science and knowledge, is based on classification. When we meet with a new fact we find a place for it in our system by saying that it is like, or like with a difference, something we already know. That is to say, our intellectual reaction to it is inevitably related to former intellectual reactions. In the same way, emotional reactions must always be on the line of former emotional reactions, and to that extent they depend on past experiences. The word " God " is a blank cheque which we all fill up in different ways—the Absolute, Nature, Jehovah, Our Father—and the real significance for ourselves of the terms we use will depend, to begin with, on our past experiences. I have myself met one or two people, for instance, to whom, owing to certain tragic early experiences, the word " Father " suggested nothing but horror and disgust, and they cannot get at God, at first anyhow, along

that road. They will have to enter the city by one of the other gates, of which, you remember, there are no fewer than twelve, some more beautiful than others, but all open. Now people talk as if to speak of the universe as a machine is very scientific and clever, while to speak of it, or the power behind it, as a person, is what is called "mere anthropomorphism." But, as Canon Streeter puts it, the universe is in a class by itself; it cannot be referred to anything for classification, therefore anything we may say about it must be symbolic. To classify the universe under Machine is just as much pure symbolism as to classify it under Person, and if there really is anything like purpose or personality in the universe at all then Machine is a misleading symbol and Person is an illuminating symbol.

By the way, it is sometimes argued that as by common consent personality, or "personalness," is the highest and most distinctive development of humanity, it must correspond to something in the constitution of the universe, that personality must be an essential attribute of God, and that to think of God as an impersonal force, the order of nature, or some such conception, is to deny the presence in God of the best thing in man. That is a philosophical or theological argument, not a psychological one, but I just want to remind you that what is called "integration," the harmonising and unifying of the various human tendencies and

capacities to form a self-consistent, independent personality, is certainly a psychological idea. So that whatever else God may be He will not be much use to us, so to speak, even as a psychological hypothesis, unless we can conceive Him and deal with Him as a person. The claim of the Christian religion is that that conception and relationship has been made possible and sure for us, brought out of hypothesis into history, because the Word was made Flesh. Religion, you see, at this point and many others, seems to come in very neatly to fit a psychological necessity. So neatly that it almost looks as if it had been made for it. But which made for which, religion made for psychology or psychology made for religion? Well, it is bad enough for the clay to say of the potter, "He made me not," but if it goes on to say, "I made Him" it is getting a little above itself.

The human lungs are so made that they function best in an atmosphere containing approximately 21 per cent oxygen and 79 per cent nitrogen. They therefore invented an atmosphere of just that composition, and arranged to have the earth surrounded with it. Did they, now? They did nothing of the sort. The atmosphere was there long before they were, they are what they are because of it, they were made for it and they are restless until they find it.

### 3. The Validity of Individual Experience.

I think that the considerations I have tried to indicate hold good when we consider, not religion in general, but some specific individual religious experience, of which conversion of the sudden type is the classical example. Many of these, as every revival shows, are hysterical and futile, but others are not so. It is easy to say that a sudden conversion represents an irruption of repressed material from the unconscious, and so far as that goes I quite agree. I have seen psychological conversion, where that process was quite obvious, in my own consulting-room. Whatever you may say or think about Divine activity, you are faced in a sudden religious conversion with what is manifestly a big psychological change, and, unless all science is nonsense, that change must have taken place along psychological lines and in conformity with psychological laws. But that does not necessarily mean that God had nothing to do with it. If you believe that God can get at man at all, it seems perfectly reasonable to suppose that He can get at a man through his unconscious as well as in other ways, and if that is so, He will work there, as elsewhere, in accordance with the nature of things, which in this region we are only beginning to understand. There is surely nothing inconceivable or unpleasant, and much that is helpful, in the idea that in the depths of our being, where are the elemental forces which link us with the

beasts, we are also linked with God. " If I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there." A man says he feels a call from God to do something or other. But, say the critics, he only feels it in his mind ; it is just a projection from his unconscious. But how else could he possibly feel it save in his mind ? Would the critics believe him more readily if he said he saw it written in the clouds, or heard it by a voice from heaven ? God clothes the grass of the field, but there is a science of botany, and God speaks in the human heart, but He does it through the laws of psychology. Yes, but how are you to know, how are you to recognise it, how are you to distinguish between God and hysteria ? That question and the answer to it are very old. By their fruits ye shall know them ; and the man who by inner honesty, self-knowledge and sacrifice has achieved some measure of psychological unity will be able to trust his intuitions and act on his motives, and to hear the still small voice. That, as I said earlier, is the psychological side of the truth that the pure in heart shall see God.

We come in sight here of another big question, the question of the psychological value for the individual of the common standard and inheritance of classified experience embodied in the Church, not what you may call the normal tradition, but the supposedly normal experience. Some would claim that the value and validity of individual religious experience can be finally

tested and assessed not on individual grounds, but by its conformity or otherwise with the collective experience enshrined in the historic Church. The Church has been apt to say not only that you must believe what the Church says you ought to believe, but also that you must experience what the Church says you ought to experience. I am not going to enter on that subject, beyond suggesting that while a standard of that sort has very real value and importance, its value is limited. For the simple reason that the standard of any collective institution is always and inevitably conservative and often definitely reactionary. That is a plain psychological fact, true of all institutions. And whatever views we may hold about the Church we deceive ourselves and do it no honour if we imagine that in that respect it is different from any other institution. It is psychologically much more important that a man should be true to himself than true to an institution, and it is a matter of history, as well as being psychologically obvious, that progress comes not from the institution as such but from individuals. And if the attitude of the institution is to be judged by its treatment of the pioneers, from Jesus himself downwards, the Church does not make a good show. But while recognising all that, you and I should be rather cautious before deciding that we ourselves can really dispense with the Church's standard and storehouse of experience, or find no guidance and inspiration in it.

If we are trying to find out the truth about religion, we cannot afford to ignore the witness of those who, through the fulfilment of the conditions necessary for spiritual experience, have earned the right to speak about it. Whether they died 3000 years ago or are still on earth, their testimony is at least worth listening to with respect, and even on the psychological side, psychology may be "new," but the mind of man is very old. We may know a little more about it, but it still works in just the same way. It is perfectly true that we must not be fettered—as we have in some ways grievously been—by the imperfect and out of date doctrines and customs of the past. Our religious experience must be our own, and it can never be standardised, but it may easily be one-sided, less comprehensive and less true than it might be, if it is not stimulated and enriched by contact with the experience of others, and if we forget that we are compassed about by a great cloud of witnesses.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SUGGESTION AND RELIGION

1. SUGGESTIBILITY.

There is still another aspect of the psychological criticism of religion which we must notice, namely the contention that religious faith and experience are produced and maintained by suggestion. This is an old argument, but the awakened popular interest in psychological matters has given it a fresh lease of life. Suggestion, as we have seen, is a process by which ideas are implanted in and accepted by the mind, in the absence of logical grounds for their acceptance. Under favourable circumstances almost any physical symptom or mental state can be produced in suitable subjects by the action of suggestion alone. Now if a person says he has any subjective experience, such as pain for instance, you must believe him—of course I am not speaking of deliberate deception—you must believe him, and regard the pain as real, because you cannot possibly prove that he is *not* experiencing it. If you then examine him and find no obvious cause for his pain, you must not say that it is " imaginary " pain, for such a thing does not exist, it is a

contradiction in terms. You may say that the cause of the pain is in his imagination, that is, that he has suggested it to himself, but the pain is none the less real for all that. In short, you do not, you cannot, deny the pain as a fact in his experience, what you do deny is the existence of any objective reality, any morbid process or foreign body in his tissues, on which the pain is, wrongly, claimed to depend.

You see at once how that works out when you apply it to religion. Beliefs may be suggested and accepted without rational basis, such as the belief that Beecham's Pills are worth a guinea a box, such as the belief that there is a God Who is love. Subjective experiences may be suggested, such as the feeling of improved health after a few doses of coloured water, such as the experience of forgiveness, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. You have favourable conditions—the desire for the experience, repeated appeals, perhaps threats, the authority of a great institution, the powerful influence of a crowd, the emotional stimulus of ritual and music and dim religious light, and so on. The whole thing, from heaven to hell, is pure suggestion ; you are worshipping your own uncriticised ideas. Of course, that is putting it rather crudely, but there it is, and you will often come across it in some form or another.

I think the first thing to say about it is to remind you that there is a good deal more than

a grain of truth in it. In this matter we may well say of psychology what David said of Shimei when he ran along shouting insults at the fugitive king: "Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him." That is to say, we may be able, and we ought to be willing, to learn something from the truth of this, and other, criticisms, before we hasten to demonstrate their falsity. Some of you will see one example of what I mean if, when you have time, you will undertake a little psychological exercise in honest introspection. For example, think over, in detail, what you do on an average Sunday, from rising till bedtime, and ask how much of what you do or do not do is the expression of your own honest and well-grounded convictions about Sunday observance and religion in general, and how much is really due to suggestion. (Remembering of course that it is just as easy, for instance, to stay away from church as the result of suggestion as it is to go to church for that reason.) Another aspect of the literally paralysing effect of suggestion is the use of conventional religious phrases and jargon by people, especially young people, who may often have very little real personal experience behind the words they use so glibly.

## 2. The Limitations of Suggestion.

We have probably all seen instances of one kind or another where the suggestive factor in

religious experience is, when we consider it, very obvious. But having said that, we may notice one or two points which seem to indicate that the suggestion theory will hardly suffice as a complete explanation of religious experience and activities.

The theory of suggestion in general implies an individual reaction of a particular psychological character, irrational and uncritical, which is determined not at all by the nature of objective reality but by the psychological state of the subject. Beliefs adopted purely by suggestion are characterised by the fact that they vary according to the capacities, needs and idiosyncrasies of the individual—or mob—concerned; such factors as race, climate, public sentiment, social position, education and so on will largely determine the particular sort of beliefs and experiences which can be produced in that way. They are also characterised, of course, by their lack of intellectual justification in the subject's mind, and by a certain fixity and incapacity for development. An Oxford man of to-day and a Jewish tax-gatherer of the first century may both be suggestible, but they are so utterly different in every respect that if we find them responding in fundamentally the same way to a certain situation we may fairly conclude that they are concerned with something which has a deep reality behind it, that their response depends not only or chiefly on what they are psychologically, but on the existence

and the nature of that reality ; that, in short, suggestion will not in this case cover the facts.

There is something wonderfully uniform in the experience and witness of the people of all times and classes and cultures who have allowed Jesus Christ to make any real personal contact with their lives ; whether, like Paul, they have gone into the solitude of Arabia to work things out alone, or have been caught in the crowded excitement of a revival, and whatever variety of form or expression may be given to their experience by the subsidiary factors I have mentioned. We have already recognised that there are many varieties of religious experience, that there are often extravagances in it, that there are also pathological imitations and parodies of it. But after allowing for all that, if we examine the basic experience, tested by its effect on their lives, of those who claim to have been in touch with Jesus Christ, we find an essential unanimity and agreement which the variety only makes more impressive, and which is in its own way conclusive evidence that we are dealing with something real. And that agreement is not so much about theories or doctrines, nor is it only in their subjective experience—of forgiveness, of peace, of strength. Their lives are changed, and they are all changed in very much the same way, and they relate their experience not to the past but to the present. Popular customs and superstitions, fads and fashions, theories and

beliefs of all sorts which are adopted by suggestion, have their day of influence with the individual or the crowd and then become powerless, obsolete and forgotten. Jesus, and the influence he has on men, do not change, and yet, in a very amazing way, he does not get out of date. We are dealing with something more than suggestion here.

Then there is the unexpectedness of so much religious experience, from that of the disciples at Easter until now. Or going further back, you remember how once a prophet of the Lord was in despair, because the forces of evil seemed too strong for him, and he ran away. What he wanted, what he would naturally have suggested to himself, was some signal manifestation of *power*. And what did he get? Not the earthquake, nor the wind, nor the fire, but the still small voice. You cannot imagine anything less like what Elijah might have been expected to suggest to himself. Whether or not that story is historically true, it is certainly religiously and psychologically true—which is the real and much neglected value of so many of the Old Testament stories. The auto-suggester experiences what he hopes for or fears, the Christian experiences things which are beyond all he could ask or think, and is led by a way that he knows not. (If anyone objects that uniformity and unexpectedness contradict each other, I may point out—without going into the matter further—that you will frequently see the same association

in the other great type of emotional experience—falling in love.)

Then there is durability. Suggested beliefs tend to lose their force through time, especially if they are contrary to hard fact or in opposition to powerful natural impulses, but we find in religious faith something which takes a man for life and holds him to his task, through peril, toil and pain, in spite of all obstacles. Suggestion will not do that.

A normal person is only moderately suggestible, an unbalanced or hysterical person much more so, therefore on the suggestion theory we should expect the Christian Church to consist of a collection of highly hysterical persons. We are well aware of the defects of the Church, but I do not think we can fairly say that hysteria is one of them. On the contrary, there is, if anything, a bovine placidity, not to say torpor, which is the very antithesis of hysteria. Of course there are hysterical Christians, just as there are hysterical grocers and hysterical typists, but the hysteria has no more essential relation to the Christianity than it has to the shop or the office. The fruit of the Spirit is peace, long-suffering, self-control, the very attributes in which the hysteric is most conspicuously deficient.

Finally, the upholders of the suggestion theory must be consistent, they must be prepared to apply it to *all* experience, and *all* subjective beliefs and values. Art, beauty, patriotism,

philanthropy, scepticism, atheism, every position which one can take up on the ground of personal experience or belief. If religion is suggestion, why not these things too? The suggestionists must logically go on to complete nihilism—and complete nonsense.

While all that may be true, there is no doubt that suggestion is present, and is often valuable, in religious experience. Suggestion is not health, and health is not suggestion, but suggestion may be used, and rightly used, to help people to reach and maintain health. Similarly it may often help them to enter more easily into religious experience, and if we know what we are doing we need have no hesitation whatever in using it in that way, for ourselves and for other people. Let us be clear that suggestion is not deception. It is one of the ways by which ideas are implanted in the mind and emotional states aroused, and, as I said earlier, these ideas and emotions may just as readily be true and valuable as they may be false and useless. If, for example, you find that you can reach a devotional frame of mind more easily in one particular church owing to some cause in which suggestion is a factor, whether it be the music, the building, the memory of some former experience, the person sitting next you, or what not, it is entirely right that you should go to that church.

A few years ago the famous Olympic sprinter, Eric Liddell, now a missionary in China, did

a good deal of preaching in various parts of Scotland. It is certain that his preaching had a greatly enhanced value and influence for some people, for the quite illogical reason that he was an Olympic champion, and both he and those who asked him to preach were perfectly right to use the suggestive influence he had in that way. His being an Olympic champion does not make what he says about religion true, but neither does it make it false, and if what he says *is* true, then we have an example of how suggestion can be a legitimate and valuable aid to religion. But remember, it is no more than that, for while you may reach a religious standpoint by the help of suggestion, it is not a durable foundation ; you must dig yourself in by real personal spade-work, intellectual, emotional and practical.

### 3. The Authority of Jesus.

You will perhaps have observed that once more I am sliding over a big question. I know that I have slid over several already, not because I do not see them or am trying to evade them, but simply because they do not really come into our subject, even if I were competent to deal adequately with them. In connection with this suggestion business we really raise the whole question of authority in religion, and we may at least ask in passing what is the difference, if any, between accepting an idea on authority and

accepting it by suggestion. Suggestion is an irrational process; is it ever rational to accept anything on any authority at all? In religion, the doctrines of an infallible church and an infallible book have gone, at least for us; is there anything left? Is it, in short, a rational thing for an adult, striving to outgrow infantile suggestibility and attain psychological independence, to accept the authority of Jesus Christ, and if so, what does that phrase mean, what is the nature and ground and scope of that authority? These are perfectly fair questions and very necessary questions, and they have great psychological interest.

Those who saw and heard Jesus on earth, taking him as he was and with no theological preconceptions, said that he spoke as one having authority. He gave them the impression that he was extraordinarily sure concerning the things he talked about, and that it was wise and safe for them to believe and act upon what he said. How did Jesus get that authority, and has he got it still? There are those who accept the authority of Jesus by suggestion; they assume it in a conventional way, even though they do not always respect it, and if you ask them why he has authority they might fall back on theological dogma and say that he has authority because he is the Son of God. There are others who reject his authority, also by suggestion, or in that rebellion which is so apt to result as a reaction against undue pressure of suggestion,

but they have not always examined it before rejecting it. It may be worth our while to think for a moment about the psychological basis of his authority, both because that is our point of view at present, and also because Jesus lived a long time ago, and if he really has any authority to-day, the psychological reasons for it are at least as likely to have durable validity as any theological ones.

In the first place, to what sort of men do we give authority in ordinary life? We give it, intelligently and rightly, to experts in their own lines, men who by their ability or learning or experience know or can do more than is possible for the rest of us. By the common consent of all who have looked at him seriously, Jesus was the great expert in the attainment of the highest type of character. There is another class of person to whom we give authority in a more personal way. We give it to people whom we think know us and understand us. You will often hear a patient say, "I have perfect confidence in Dr So-and-so, he understands my system." It is as plain as anything in the Gospels that Jesus made that sort of impression on people; they felt that he not only knew what was in man, but knew what was in *them*, even better than they themselves did. Even more compelling, he somehow seemed able to bring out the best in them—in people like Nicodemus and Peter and Zacchæus and the

woman of Samaria. Therefore, inevitably, they recognised his authority.

Secondly, who are the people who can most justifiably be sure about the meaning of their own subjective experiences and the genuineness of their motives? As we have seen, they are those who have gained the greatest degree of inner harmony and unification of their life-interest. There also Jesus is supreme. Nobody has ever been so utterly free from hypocrisy or inconsistency or indecision.

Thirdly, if we grant that there are any non-material realities at all, who are those best qualified to recognise and reveal them? As we have also seen, they are those who have most perfectly fulfilled the conditions necessary for entering into spiritual experience, who have submitted and given themselves most fully to the discipline of the things that are unseen and eternal. Nobody ever did that as Jesus did. He said it was his meat and drink to do it.

So there would seem to be perfectly good reasons, to which psychology cannot object, for giving Jesus authority on questions of character or of spiritual reality. And we must not forget that that authority has been tested and tried and criticised for nineteen centuries in endless ways and to a degree which has no parallel; yet the words and personality of this man who lived so long ago have ever since made, and still make, a claim to which men yield, with results

for their own lives and for the world which are a plain matter of history.

It is not our concern here to go further. Some who have given Jesus authority have said strange things about him. They have said that he made all things new for them, they have called him Redeemer and Lord, they have spoken not of his authority but of his love, they have crowned him with many crowns. They have passed into a region of experience where scientific arguments have no place, but as we to-day look at the authority of Jesus from a psychological standpoint, I think we may at least say that we can find no valid reason for rejecting it, and some very good ones for accepting it. But if questions about that authority arise, you must not take the answers for granted, you must not, at any cost, rely on phrases and formulas, you must find out your own answers—for nobody else's will do—test them in real life, and then—if you can—live by them.

## 4. The Craving for Magic.

Now to come back to what we were saying about suggestion in religion. The principles I have tried to indicate may be applied to other religious questions; the matter of prayer, for instance. Suggestion has certainly a place in prayer, but no demonstration of that subjective influence has any decisive bearing on the

question of the objective value and efficacy of prayer. Ideas held in the mind, whether by prayer or otherwise, tend to realise themselves in act, and part of the value of prayer, more than some people like to recognise, is certainly subjective. A man who has been vainly trying to gain a moral victory by effort and fighting, with constant fear, based on sad experience, that he is bound to fail, relaxes his straining, takes for granted that by the help of God and in the strength of God he is going to win, and wins. But the fact that that man's experience conforms to psychological laws does not prove that God had nothing to do with it. Yet that does not seem to satisfy some of those people, still with us in large numbers, whose demand is always for a sign, for something they cannot understand, whose God is and must be a magician. I recently heard a good definition of magic in relation to religion. Magic is *managing*—sometimes even stage-managing—God. That is worth thinking over in connection with prayer and other things. I believe in God, but I do not believe in magic. In fact it is largely because I believe in God that I cannot believe in magic. Magic is not only sub-christian, it is pre-religious, an attitude to the universe from which we are delivered not only by science but by real religion also. We do not yet understand everything, there are many things which we shall never understand, and we must keep, and be glad to keep, our humility

and our sense of wonder. But it is both our nature and our duty to go on trying to understand things, and when we do come in some degree to understand a thing, whether it be the structure of a flower, or the creation of the world, or answered prayer, that does not mean that the thing has ceased to be divine. On the contrary, it means that to that extent we have become partakers of the divine nature. There is no more reason for saying that a thing is not divine because we happen to understand it, or think we do, than there is for the opposite and equally dangerous error of assuming that a thing must be specially divine if we happen not to understand it.

This idea of God as a magician reminds us that some of the psychological criticisms we have been discussing do find some confirmation in the religious attitudes of children. I do not mean the natural spontaneous religion of a child's own heart, but the stuff we so often and so mistakenly teach them. Far too much reward and punishment, sometimes even fear, too much law, too much heaven, too much magic. We tell them stories, and because they like dramatic and interesting stories we tell them chiefly about extraordinary or miraculous incidents in the Bible, so that inevitably they get the impression that God and Jesus are in the first place supremely competent magicians, even better than the conjuror they saw last Christmas.

There is a story about myself, when a small

boy, which you will perhaps forgive, as it illustrates the point quite neatly. I admit that I do not remember the incident, but I have good reason to believe that it is quite authentic. It was at tea on Sunday afternoon, and I was making myself very unpleasant because my younger brother had been given a slice of cake which I thought was larger than mine. It was pointed out to me that I must not be greedy and selfish, but that even if his piece was larger I should be quite content and even glad about it, and that Jesus would certainly have made no fuss but would have been quite ready to take the smaller piece. To which I replied, " It's all very well for Jesus. He had only to say, ' Cake, be here ' and there it was, but cakes are not so easily got in this house." After tea we probably sang hymns. " I want to be like Jesus." Manifestly that did not mean, to me, " I want to have a certain kind of character " but " I want to be able to produce cakes by magic whenever I like."

I cannot enter on the very large and difficult subject of the religious education of children in relation to their psychology, save to remind you that children are amazingly suggestible and receptive, also, thank heaven, amazingly direct and simple and honest. We must have a real and deep respect for the mind of a child, we must remember the deadliness of fear, and above all we must strive to teach him, whether directly or by suggestion, as little as possible that he

will have to unlearn later on. Unlearning is often much more difficult and painful than learning, and it is bound to be psychologically harmful in a way that the learning of even only partially comprehended truth can never be.

# CHAPTER IX

## SOME FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### 1. Common Sense and Psychology.

I would like at this point to say one or two things of a quite simple and practical nature. We have been talking a good deal about very modern psychological theories, and although I have been trying to keep at least one foot on the ground, some of you may have felt at times that we were rather in the air, and in danger of getting out of touch with everyday life. While I believe that the things we have been talking about are very important, we must remember—as is not always done nowadays—that while the new psychology does in many respects amplify the old, and in some directions even supersede it, the fundamental laws of the working of the human mind have not changed, and if some of us would pay a little more attention to the old psychology we would not require to bother much about the new. That is true of all aspects of life, including the religious aspect. Take as one example the psychology of habits. We have always known that if we can only form a habit, actions which are difficult or unpleasant at the first attempt will become bearable, easy, pleasant,

desirable, indispensable. Some of you have had that sort of experience with things like smoking or cold baths, for instance, but perhaps you have not realised that the psychological laws of habit apply in religion too. I grant you that the formation of moral or spiritual habits may be more difficult and may take longer, but these higher things are more difficult anyhow, and we therefore have all the more need of the help that habit can give. Nobody who has not honestly tried to form a habit of that sort in the same persistent way that he has done in other directions has any right to say that the thing is too difficult, or to make the excuse that it is not worth doing.

I need hardly illustrate further. The laws of the association of ideas, the value and danger of imagination, the ease of self-deception, the sequence of thought and act—you know them all quite well, and yet many people who want to make a better thing of their life forget how much they mean. I must not go beyond my subject, but it is only right to remind you, without in any way minimising the importance of modern psychology, that some people would do well to remember that psychological analysis is not necessarily a prerequisite of religion or of common sense, or a substitute for either of them. You could have no sounder bit of practical psychology than this, for instance, which is as old as the apostle James, " Act on the Word, instead of merely listening to it and

deluding yourselves. For whoever listens and does nothing, is like a man who glances at his natural face in a mirror ; he glances at himself, goes off, and at once forgets what he was like. Whereas he who gazes into the faultless law of freedom, and remains in that position "—there's habit for you—" proving himself to be no forgetful listener but an active agent, he will be blessed in his activity." (James i. 22-25. Moffatt.)

## 2. Psychological Types in Religion.

There are many other points on which one would like to touch in connection with psychology and religion, if one had time. Consider, for example, the various psychological types represented in the denominations of Christianity, let alone other religions. This is very interesting in view of present discussions about church union, because the mental make-up of a high-church Anglican, for instance, is quite different in certain respects from that of a Baptist or a Quaker. The one must have certain elements in the expression of his religion which are necessary for his psychological satisfaction, though to the person of a different type these things are not only unnecessary, but may be a positive hindrance to his religious expression. It is thus a psychological impossibility for them ever to achieve any durable sort of uniformity in religious belief or practice, however much

they may love each other, and however willing they may be to co-operate in practical affairs. I have even seen some cases where grave injury was being done, by sons and daughters being forced into a particular form of religious expression which, however well it may have suited their parents, was totally inadequate and unsuitable for them. Yet many parents, who are quite willing that their child should have a different physical diet from the rest of the family for his stomach's sake, object very strongly to his having a different spiritual diet for his soul's sake. You know the familiar anti-socialist argument that if all the wealth in the world were to be equally divided you would soon have paupers and capitalists again because of the varying business capacities of men; so if all the sects were to be forcibly and artificially unified you would soon have divisions again because of the different psychological characteristics of men.

On the other hand, sects which are very much opposed religiously may be very much alike psychologically. There are, for example, certain ultra-protestant sects, violently antagonistic to anything savouring of Rome, who show as great a degree of rigid and uncritical submission to authority as the strictest Roman of them all. In the one case the authority is the letter of Scripture, in the other it is the Church, but, psychologically, the two religious antagonists are very much the same. As Stephen Paget said

about the monkeys, " I hate them, because they are so like me." There are even certain types of Christianity which are more closely related psychologically to pagan religions than they are to other Christian types. A contemplative and ascetic Catholic saint is psychologically much more like a Buddhist than he is like a blood-and-fire Salvation Army man, and the Salvation Army man would not require so very much psychological modification to make him into quite a good Moslem. I know a body of church office-bearers—in fact I know several—whose religious attitude is really Chinese, ancestor worship, a morbid reverence for the past. That type of mentality is painfully common in many Christian congregations, as well as in many Christian individuals.

The converse of all this, of course, is equally true, and its bearing on missionary work is obvious. It would suggest, for instance, that Catholic or Quaker missions should leave a place like Morocco to the Salvation Army, and that the Army should leave the Buddhists to the Quakers. And the impressive thing is that in Christianity, to an infinitely greater extent than in any other religion, all psychological types can somewhere and somehow find what they need. There is something to be said for the view that the multiplicity of sects is not altogether a disgrace to Christianity, but quite a strong point in its favour.

### 3. The Justification of Faith.

I hope we have realised in our discussion that religion must never be afraid of any scientific truth (still less of any scientific theory, which may or may not embody truth), and that in particular it must not and need not shrink from the fullest psychological investigation. After all, nothing but what is utterly true matters, and we must believe in a progressive revelation and apprehension of truth, religious and otherwise. It will certainly mean that some things, perhaps some cherished things, will have to go, but it will also mean that other and more central things will find convincing confirmation, they will be seen from a more soundly based standpoint, and gain an enhanced and more enduring value.

One thing which is becoming clear from modern psychology is that we have failed to appreciate the importance of the emotional factors in life. The whole tendency of our time is to glorify reason and intellect and science as the highest and most important mental activities. We have not really believed that the greatest thing in the world, the greatest force in life, is emotion, yet that has been the message of Christianity all the time, God is love, and now psychology is saying the same thing in its own peculiar way. Another lesson from psychology is the supreme importance of the right direction of the life-energy and interest, and the

need for adequate outlet and expression. It is a psychological truth of the first importance that where there is no vision the people perish. If a man is to be psychologically adult and free, able to make his full individual contribution to the life and service of society, he must have visions great enough to engage his interests fully and worthily, and living enough to occupy them increasingly. Which is just a psychological way of saying that he must seek first the Kingdom of God.

As we saw, one watchword of psychology is independence. A man must be able to think for himself, to face his own problems, to accept his own feelings, to act on his own responsibility, with due regard to his social environment. When you think of it, that is essentially Christian teaching. Jesus made no rules, he tried to make men think for themselves. There is a religious classic called *The Imitation of Christ* but I wonder if he would have approved of the title. You cannot really imitate Christ, and I do not think he wants you to. He taught in parables and paradoxes and sayings that sound—and are—extreme and exaggerated and impossible as they stand. Deliberately, in order to force men to use their minds. We have not got the code of Jesus, we have the mind of Christ, and we cannot make it into a code. The only thing we can do with it is to allow it to make contact with our own minds, that we may come in some small measure to make his way of looking

at things our own, so that our mind and personality is not stifled or tied or overwhelmed, but developed and strengthened and set free. And that sort of thing will not happen by any easy and unconscious suggestibility ; those who have tried it know that it demands all the wholehearted consecration a man can give it. That is a line of thought which it is not for me to follow out, but it does at least seem to be one indication—and there are many—of the impressive psychological soundness of the Christian religion.

### 4. The Ultimate Test.

You may remember that in our earlier theoretical discussion I tried to outline what would seem to be the psychological standard or ideal of development. We shall never go very far wrong, in psychology or anything else, if we take care to test our theories by facts, and we may go grievously wrong if we fail to do so. It is therefore important to look at a man, if we can find one, who seems, judging by the actual manner in which he lives his life, to have attained full psychological stature, and then to note his attitude to religion. We do not often come across people who strike us as being psychologically adequate, and we very constantly meet more or less obvious psychological failures —irritable, restless, futile, self-absorbed, undeveloped and unbalanced personalities. Where

shall we find the most complete contrast to all that sort of thing? Now, is it because of the suggestive teaching we have received all our lives, or is it because this is a Christian Conference and it is the proper thing to say, or is it because it is the simple and inescapable truth, that we turn at once to Jesus of Nazareth?

We see there a really unified personality, utter sanity and balance and harmony of mind, freedom and control, intense vitality and complete self-mastery, triumphant adequacy in the face of the worst that life or death could bring. From the psychological point of view, apart from any other, here is the perfect man, and we know what he thought about religion and the place it had in his life. We know that his personal relationship to God *was* his life. If religion is really a neurosis, or auto-suggestion, or a relic of infantile attitudes, how are we to account for Jesus? We may examine him by the latest theories in psychology or any other science, and he meets the test and still stands supreme and unique. Here, as elsewhere, the final answer to all our questions and all our arguments is in him. As Dr Maltby said at Liverpool, "The very facts which came in to threaten faith, being confronted with him, become subject, and yield their tribute of nobler thoughts of God."

We began by recognising that scientific psychology has a perfect right to ask religion to re-examine itself, and we have tried, very

imperfectly but at least, I hope, honestly, to do that in one or two directions. And at the finish it would seem that the question is really the other way round, and of a rather more personal kind, namely, whether a man can indeed attain his full psychological development at all, apart from religion. It begins to look as if religion might be, after all, not an infantile regression or an illusory hypothesis, but the very crown and completion of life.

# APPENDIX

## "SPIRITUAL HEALING"

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## " SPIRITUAL HEALING "

THE subject of spiritual healing is not a new one, but like a good many other anticonventional ideas, both good and bad, it has become more prominent during and since the war. There have been many conferences and discussions about it, and " healing " missions have been held in various places throughout the world, the most notable being those conducted by Mr J. M. Hickson, to whose work I shall refer later. It is very necessary to be clear as to what exactly is meant by the term " Spiritual Healing " or " Faith Healing " in this connection. I am considering the claim of certain persons that Christ gave to the Church the double commission to preach the gospel and to heal the sick, that the latter part of this commission is as literal and binding as the former part, that Christ gave his Church the power to fulfil it, that through lack of faith the Church has largely lost this power, and that she should regain it. It is claimed that bodily and mental disease can be cured by the direct intervention of God in response to prayer and the laying on of hands, with or without the use of anointing oil,

and that this power of God is mediated through divinely endowed healers who, if the Church had devotion and faith enough, would be much more numerous and active than is the case.

We are not concerned with the undoubted fact that much disease is the result of sin. It may be quite true that if this were a Christian community in any full sense of the term, the diseases due to bad housing, drink and vice would soon disappear. It is true that if, under the influence of Christian principles, we abolish slums, we will greatly diminish tuberculosis; but to use that fact, as one well-known writer has done, as a basis for the claim that Christian faith heals tuberculosis, is, to my mind, quite unwarrantable and even ridiculous. Nor are we considering the value of the Christian attitude to suffering or of Christian faith as a power for enabling a man to gain and keep a calm and cheerful and hopeful state of mind when he is ill, with confident acceptance of the will of God. The general mental state of a patient is always an important factor in his case; sometimes decisively so. As far as that goes the value of religious faith may be very great, and may in a real sense be called a healing value in that it is certainly a factor making for recovery. So much no experienced physician will deny, but this is not the claim of the spiritual healers, and for them to produce evidence of that sort is mere trifling. Their claim is that the direct power of God should be available through healers to effect

actual physical changes in the bodies of sick persons, and, while they profess not to ignore ordinary medical work, they regard " spiritual " methods as being able to do what medical work cannot do even in the physical sphere. Like many other mistaken ideas, their error—if, as I suggest, it is an error—is founded on a truth, namely the intimate relationships of body, mind and spirit in man, but they have emphasised and misapplied that truth in ways which to my mind are false and dangerous, both for medicine and for religion.

It is now a matter of general knowledge that mental states can influence bodily functions. It is well recognised that respiration, circulation, secretion, muscular movement and other physical functions can be stimulated, retarded or perverted in endless ways by causes which are essentially mental. These causes may be included under the term " suggestion," a psychological process which we have already defined and discussed.

It is a psychological fact that any idea introduced into and accepted by the mind tends to express and realise itself in bodily change or movement. There may be opposing ideas in the mind or hampering circumstances in the environment, but in a real sense and to a great extent it is still true that as a man thinketh in his heart so is he. The action and the application of suggestion is becoming increasingly recognised and placed on a scientific basis, though to the

uninitiated and unreflecting the results of its operation may sometimes appear very marvellous. It may be of various kinds and applied in many ways, but if it has to have any effect the subject must have a certain emotional attitude both to the idea and to its source, he must have a certain degree of suggestibility. This is a normal attribute of humanity and its value in childhood is great, but it should diminish with age, education, and the development of independence and of a critical faculty. It is increased in conditions of fatigue or weakness, and varies in different persons, or in the same person at different times, according to their physical and mental state, the value to them of the suggested idea, its emotional accompaniments if any, the skill and prestige of the operator if there be one, and other factors. Suggestibility is of great importance and interest in many spheres outside medicine, but it is only with its medical applications that I am now concerned. For suggestion to be effective the patient must have, as I have said, a certain mental attitude ; he must believe not only that something can happen but that it is going to happen ; he must have faith. There is no manner of doubt that that sort of faith does cure certain morbid conditions and it does so because it increases to an indefinite extent the susceptibility of the patient to suggestion.

States of disease may be roughly divided into the two classes of organic and functional,

diseases of structure and diseases of function. A simple example would be to take two cases where there is difficulty in speaking—one a tumour of the throat, and the other a stammer. In the former case there is gross structural damage; in the latter, so far as our present knowledge goes, none at all. The tumour is an organic disease, the stammer is functional. It is important to remember that this classification is not definite, and no clear line can be drawn, for as knowledge has progressed many conditions formerly regarded as functional have been shown to have an organic basis, and there are some who believe that sooner or later this will happen in every case. Further, it is plain that functional alterations can affect organic disturbances, a familiar example being the increased amount of blood flowing to a part structurally damaged by injury and microbic action, such as a poisoned wound or a boil. There are some conditions which are manifestly organic, such as a cancer; others which, with our present knowledge, we can only call functional, such as a stammer; and others where it is difficult to say whether the structural damage or the functional disorder is primary.

It is in the field of functional disorder that suggestion does its work, and I would set no limit to what may happen in that field under its influence in favourable circumstances, but it is in cases of organic disorder that the real problem arises. As I say, the line between

functional and organic cannot be clearly drawn ; it is even true—at least theoretically—that every structural change implies a functional change, and vice versa. But, although like every physician of any experience I have seen some very remarkable things happen in human bodies, when we are dealing with cases of obvious organic disease, with actual destruction or mechanical breakdown of physical structure, I want to have very exact scientific confirmation both of the nature of the disease and of its cure before I can accept the claim that such disease has been cured by suggestion, and so far I have not had that confirmation in any single case.

There is another point which must always be remembered. It is one thing to say that a patient got better ; it may be quite another thing to say what " cured " him. As a typical example of cure by suggestion we may take one which is familiar to every physician. A patient has pain, which he believes that morphia and nothing but morphia will relieve sufficiently to allow him to sleep. If, as frequently happens, the pain is of a hysterical nature, which means that though it is absolutely real to the patient there is no objective bodily cause producing it, he may be given a hypodermic injection with all due ceremony, but consisting of water only, and he will sleep like a log all night. He believed that morphia would make him sleep ; he believed that he had received morphia ; therefore, he slept. But his sleep does not prove

that he got morphia, and the fact is that he did not get morphia. In short, his sleep, his cure—and a very real cure—depended not at all on the object of his faith, but on the faith itself, its quality and intensity. That illustrates a principle which is absolutely fundamental in any discussion of faith healing.

Turning now to the religious side, we may begin by asking whether disease in general is contrary to the will of God for His children on this earth. That raises the whole problem of the existence of evil, which it is not for me to discuss. The question has, of course, been answered in a very definite way by Christian Science, which claims that disease is so extremely contrary to the will of God that it does not in fact exist at all. It is perhaps not necessary to consider this subject fully here. I will only point out, first, that Christian Science does undoubtedly cure certain cases of functional nervous disorder more or less permanently, by suggestion. (It must be remembered that cures by suggestion, however applied, are very apt to be only temporary, because functional disorders frequently depend on deep-rooted psychological maladjustments which suggestion does not reach, but at the best only covers up more effectively. " They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people *slightly*, saying, ' Peace, peace,' when there is no peace.") Second, the cures of Christian Science are quite negligible compared with its tragic failures, the amount of physical

and mental suffering for which it is responsible, and the abandonment of clear thinking which it demands. Third, the theoretical objection to Christian Science is not that its cures, such as they are, depend on suggestion, which properly used is a perfectly legitimate and valuable form of treatment for suitable cases, but that they are associated with ideas and teachings which—as has frequently been remarked—are neither Christian nor scientific, but the antithesis of both.

I propose therefore, without further discussion, to ignore Christian Science and to assume that disease does exist. That being so, it is clearly impossible to maintain that it is the will of God that every sick person should get better; it is also impossible to say that accidents involving injury or death should never happen. Besides, while I am not going to discuss the problem of pain, one of the factors in that problem is the positive gain to humanity from pain and disease. If these things are contrary to the purpose of God, then so likewise are sympathy, charity, courage and endurance, so also the grace which is sufficient for us and the strength which is made perfect in weakness.

Assuming then that God does permit disease to exist, the next question is whether He will intervene for recovery in any particular case, especially in answer to the prayer of faith, with or without laying on of hands and unction. This raises the problem of the meaning and

value of prayer, another of the many questions which I must touch but cannot discuss fully. It is clear to myself that we cannot affirm in any case that it must be the will of God that this or that patient should recover, but that does not imply that prayer for recovery should not be made, though we cannot know whether or not it will be effectual. There are cases where to all appearance prayer seems to have made all the difference between life and death, there are other cases where equally earnest prayer has made no obvious difference whatever, and there are still other cases where a sheer miracle seems to have taken place without any prayer at all.

But here again I want to emphasise the danger of vague generalities and conventional phrases. The issue is not the value of prayer, or the meaning of suffering, or the goodness of God, but the plain question, Will particular prayer, in a particular case, cause the cure of a particular disease, and is that a specific method ordained by Christ for the Church ?

If we admit at least the possibility of the intervention of God for cure in some cases, the next question is how He does it. I think it is here that many people go astray and stop thinking, because they fail to make the distinction between miracle and magic. God does not work by magic, but in and through His own laws of nature. It is through the laws of physical nature that He made the universe, it is through the laws of psychology that He speaks in the

heart of man, it is through the facts and laws of anatomy and physiology that He heals disease. I believe that God does heal disease ; I believe that He sometimes does it through the natural resistance of the body, sometimes through drugs, surgery, massage, violet rays, suggestion, sometimes even through psychological analysis. But I do not believe that any one method or any one case of recovery is more specially " spiritual " than any other. And I find it as impossible to believe that God would, or could, disperse a tumour or destroy an infection by a mere *fiat*, as to believe that it was in that way He created the heaven and the earth. Medicine has developed out of primitive magic ; so has religion ; and any movement which would take both medicine and religion back again to magic is a retrograde movement. But there are some people who are not past magic yet, still seeking Jesus because of the loaves and fishes.

Let me remind you of the inexhaustible story of Naaman the Syrian. He wanted to be cured, but he and his staff had their own ideas of how it was to be done. They had two alternatives in view. One was that he would be asked to do " some great thing "—a pilgrimage, a large donation, a drastic or painful ordeal, something more or less heroic and, preferably, spectacular. The other was a sudden and dramatic bit of magic on Elisha's doorstep. " He will come out to me, and stand, and call on the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and

recover the leper." But Naaman got neither of these ; he was told instead to do something very simple, quite unmagical, and rather humiliating. (I wonder if any of the modern faith-healers ever tell their patient to go away and take a dose of castor oil.) It is the old and everlasting craving for magic, for a sign, that is really at the back of much of the talk about faith-healing. In fact it might well be argued that these people who talk so much about faith have actually got less of it than ordinary mortals, and are looking for magic to bolster up their faith.

Now to come back to the cures. We have seen that faith does cure certain sorts of functional illness. Faith in patent medicines, in electric belts, in quack doctors, in real doctors, in Lourdes, in Mrs Eddy, in Coué, in any person or object you like, if only the patient has enough faith. But such cures prove nothing whatever as to the power or value of the object of faith, they only prove that the faith itself was present and active and by its existence made the patient more ready to accept the idea of cure, more suggestible, and therefore more curable. They also go a long way to prove that the disease, no matter what name the patient may have given to it, was functional and not organic in nature. The object of a faith which produces a brilliant and apparently miraculous cure may often be quite unworthy of any faith at all in the sense of that commitment of the whole personality which is religious faith.

Faith in God can be a deeper and more powerful thing than faith in any earthly person or object or method, because it has a surer basis and a wider range and can be more consistently and constantly held, but the principle still stands that so far as healing is concerned the psychological value of faith—I am not talking about religious values—depends not on its object but on its quality and intensity. I do not think that a faith in God which is looking for healing in the first instance is by any means the highest form of religious faith. It may have no moral value at all, no relationship to the whole purpose and meaning of life, no conviction about the things which are unseen and eternal.

I confess I find it hard to see how people can try to make "spiritual healing" an essential part of Christian doctrine when they look at plain facts, when they consider that many of the greatest saints have been the greatest sufferers, when they see people whose religious faith, and the character it produces in them, is a shining witness to the reality and the goodness of God, yet who are never free from bodily pain; and when, on the other hand, they see around them people who make no profession of any sort of faith in God at all, but yet enjoy and maintain radiant bodily health.

From the reasonable and scientific standpoint, we have to recognise, whatever our personal religious beliefs may be, that such cures as are reported during faith-healing missions are

exactly the same as we get from Coué, from patent medicines, from Christian Science, from uncritical sources in general. The same type of case, the same lack of scientific confirmation either of the existence of the named disease or of its cure, the same apparently miraculous results. That is to say, these cures are all the result of suggestion. Let me say again that I do not want to appear to be trying to get God out of the way, but I do want to get magic out of the way.

I recently read, not without effort, the book by the famous spiritual healer Mr J. M. Hickson, giving his account of his missions all over the world during the five years after the war. I read every case carefully, and I did not find a single one which either could not be fully accounted for on the suggestion theory or else which offered any reliable evidence of the existence of the disease named, or of its cure. What I did find, apart from wearisome records of manifest hysteria, was firstly that Mr Hickson will hardly cross the street, let alone start a mission, unless he has two or three Church dignitaries at his side, and secondly that all the reports sent after him by his sponsors and supporters in the various places he visited say exactly the same things. Results, they say, have been very remarkable, but we must have patience, we do not want statistics in God's work, we must believe in results which are not apparent, spiritual results are more important than merely

physical ones, and so on. All the vague generalities and conventional phrases which are so utterly out of place in this matter. Nobody denies that, speaking generally, spiritual things are more important than physical things, but when we are dealing with a mission whose specific and avowed object is the healing of bodily disease we want facts, not pious platitudes and what I can only call evasions of the truth. And the plain facts are that some cases of suggestible persons suffering from functional nervous disorders were cured or temporarily relieved ; there is no evidence that any other cases were affected at all.

Further, if we accept their hypothesis that healing is a " spiritual " gift of God, the necessity for the presence of the Church dignitaries, or, indeed, of Mr Hickson with his laying on of hands, is not apparent. God gives other and greater spiritual gifts, the forgiveness of sin, the fellowship of the Spirit. They are given in an individual transaction, and, for those who believe that man may have immediate access to God, there is no need for any human or other intermediary in that transaction. If God can forgive sin without laying on of hands, surely He can also heal " spiritually " without it ; there should be even less need—not more, as would appear—for mediation and ceremonial. But we are not yet disembodied spirits, and the case is really different. Material or " non-spiritual " things are also God's gifts, but it is

His will that they come, and come only, either through natural processes which we can in measure control and understand, or through human agency of a very practical kind.

We shall be considering in a moment a passage in the Epistle of James on which the " spiritual healers " base their conclusions, and there is another passage in that same epistle which may illustrate the point. " If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled ; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body ; what doth it profit ? " Many diseases are due to insufficient or improper food, and they cannot be healed by God or man unless adequate and proper material nourishment is supplied. Other diseases are due to ignorance or neglect of natural physical or psychological processes, and they cannot be healed unless knowledge is supplied. God gives us daily bread for our bodies, but He also gives us bakers and cooks, without whose help grace before meat would be a mockery ; He also gives us knowledge for our minds, but we attain it by study and instruction, not by direct revelation. I am not arguing for a rigid separation between " spiritual " and " not spiritual " but exactly the reverse, for it seems to me that it is the " spiritual healers " who are making that dangerous distinction by their arbitrary limitation of the term " spiritual," deciding for themselves, and even for God, how

He ought to work in His world, and ignoring the knowledge He has given us—in this case the knowledge of anatomy and physiology and psychology—to show how, as a matter of fact, He does work. (Incidentally, the real importance of the laying on of hands in certain hysterical cases is that it has a powerful suggestive effect, being analogous to the " passes " which are sometimes used to induce a state of hypnosis.)

I must honestly say that I have never read a more thoroughly unsatisfactory and unconvincing book than Mr Hickson's.

I have so far said nothing about the healing of disease by Jesus, and I speak with hesitation about a matter which is still so much in dispute by those who are expert in theological matters. But the subject is very relevant, and I can only tell you quite frankly what I myself believe. To begin with, Jesus was a perfectly unique personality and he had a perfectly unique mission to fulfil. That mission will never need to be carried out again ; there never was, and never will be, another Jesus. That being so, it is not unreasonable for anyone who believes in God at all to expect that things would happen in relation to Jesus which could never happen to any other person before or since, not even to his own immediate disciples. And so they did, but that does not mean that Jesus was a magician, or independent of the nature of things. And whatever may have been meant by the saying about " Greater works than these shall

ye do," I do not think that it can be taken as referring to works of healing at all. "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" "This is the work of God," not "that ye do miracles," but "that ye believe." Jesus did not class his miracles among his great works, and in many cases he took pains to secure secrecy about them. He did not base his claims on them; they were the spontaneous expressions of his compassionate spirit and his dynamic personality.

I think it is quite plain that some of the healing miracles were cures by suggestion, and I think Jesus knew that perfectly well. Blind Bartimæus of Jericho was in a highly suggestible state; he would not be dissuaded by the crowd, and when faced by Jesus he at once and confidently asked for his sight to be restored The blind man of Bethsaida, on the other hand, was apparently doubtful, if not suspicious. He had to be brought by his friends, and Jesus evidently knew that cure by a word would be impossible. The walk through the town and the making and application of the clay were precisely calculated to awaken curiosity and wonder and hope—that is, to increase suggestibility—and the gradual result is quite in keeping.

At least one recorded miracle seems to have been the result of what I might call an instantaneous psychological analysis; the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. I do not mean a religious analysis; there is

nothing at all about religion in the story; it reads to me like a beautiful psychological demonstration. The point of it is in the question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" It seems a curious, unkind, almost insulting question to ask anyone who is ill, yet instead of replying that of course he wanted to be well the man began at once to complain about other people. (His dignified and measured utterance, as we have it, gives a very false impression, unless we use our imaginations, of the impassioned tirade of an eastern beggar. I have myself heard the real thing in very similar circumstances, at the hot springs near Tiberias.) We begin to wonder how it was that in thirty and eight years this man had apparently not made a single friend. But it looks as if he was a case of hysteria. He was, no doubt, the oldest inhabitant of the pool, a well-known public character whose position was not entirely without its advantages. (He reminds me of the man in one of the *Sherlock Holmes* stories who found that he could make a larger income by disguising himself as a crippled beggar than by working in an office.) It would be quite in keeping with our knowledge of hysteria that he should be entirely unconscious that his illness was a pose, that he was really gaining something by it, and therefore did *not* want to be made whole. I need not point out that the story has a profound religious significance, but that lies in its symbolism, not in the healing as such. And to

my own mind the psychological interpretation increases it rather than otherwise.

Other miracles of Jesus may have depended on his intuitive grasp of laws which even yet our slow science has not understood—though I think that sort of argument is sometimes pushed rather too far, but there are some regarding which I find it impossible to believe that they took place as recorded, for the simple reason that I cannot conceive the changes which would have to have taken place in the patients' bodies. I do not say positively that they did not happen, but I cannot honestly say I believe that they did, and if that attitude is illogical I can only say, quite reverently, that I do not care, because these miracles have, for me, no religious value whatever.

Have you ever asked yourselves whether it would help your religious faith in Jesus, or make him greater to you, if you read that he never ate or drank, or that he was able to fly through the air from Capernaum to Jerusalem? I venture to think that it would not help your faith at all, but very much otherwise. Consider what that means and implies if you think it out. Jesus completely upset the preconceived ideas of his contemporaries as to what a divine man should be and do, but we sometimes find it hard to allow him to upset ours. I may be all wrong and my own ideas may require a good deal of upsetting, and I am very sincerely sorry if I am offending anybody's convictions, but

to me personally Jesus would not be one bit greater if every miracle was proved to be literal fact, nor any less great if every one were fully explained, in terms of suggestion or in any other way. The only miracle that matters is Jesus himself, and that miracle I accept.

With regard to the miracles of the early Church, I should not violently oppose anyone who claimed, on general principles, that in the first days of Christianity the direct intervention of God in human affairs was more necessary and more frequent than it is to-day. But that is really not the point, and I am even more disposed than in the case of Jesus to seek for explanations of the apostles' miracles in natural terms, and to reject those which cannot be so explained.

That leads us to the other main question. Did the Church ever have, and ought it now to have, the power of direct healing of disease? I do not know the views of the experts on the historical facts, but stress appears to be laid on the familiar passage in the Epistle of James, where it is stated that if anyone is sick the elders of the Church are to be summoned to pray and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord, and that he will then recover.

The first thing that strikes one about that passage is that if such a simple and rapid and satisfactory method of dealing with sickness had been found to work in actual practice it would have persisted unchanged up to the present time,

which it has not done. I recently read, with amazement, an extraordinarily naïve explanation of this fact. A serious writer on psychology and religion says that healing by non-material methods began to be "exploited by quacks, pseudo-magicians and knaves," and the Church therefore "quite rightly washed her hands of it." On such reasoning, the flood of patent medicines should make doctors give up prescribing, and the manufacture of paste diamonds should render the crown jewels valueless. The more usual explanation is that the Church lost faith, but I want to know why it lost faith. If the method had worked with even moderate regularity and success in James' day, the Church would not have lost faith ; the suffering public would have seen to that. And so far as I am aware we have no evidence that it did work with any regularity even in James' day.

But apart from that, I cannot think that the instructions in the passage were ever meant to be either literal or comprehensive. (By the way, if we are going to take them so, we must of course do likewise with the verse immediately preceding, which says, you remember, that if anyone is merry he is to sing psalms. Like every good Scotsman, I myself have a peculiar affection for the Psalms, but surely even Mr Hickson would agree that there are many occasions where merriment would be entirely justified but where psalms would be quite out

of place. And if he does not so agree, I think I shall not find myself alone, nor in bad company, by differing from him.)

James himself, as his whole epistle shows, was a very practical and matter-of-fact person, who expected people to use their common sense. I do not believe he would have broadcast those instructions to the Church unless he had assumed that the Church would take for granted, in the most natural way, that of course the physicians would do their bit too, and that even on occasion the physicians' bit would be the whole story.

I am confirmed in that view by what James says earlier in the epistle, comparing faith and works. Faith without works, he says, is dead, and I think he would have agreed that if you are going to rely on faith-healing without medical works there is grave risk that the patient will be dead too. It is rather a striking parallel which James draws, when you come to think of it. He says that as body is to spirit, so is—not works to faith, but faith to works. Which would mean that works are, or may be, more spiritual than faith, a surgical operation more truly religious than a prayer.

One simple test would be to think what a faith-healer will do in a case where he thinks he knows the cause of the illness, as when his child has a digestive upset due to eating unripe fruit. He will do just what any other person would do, and he will not ask the elders or

anybody else to help him. And nobody need say that in a case like that it is " quite different." That gives away the whole position, because it is not the least bit different, and if the resort to " faith " pure and simple is not justified in a child's colic it is not justified anywhere. What it comes to is that such people will try ordinary methods if they think they know what is wrong, and fall back on " faith " if they do not know what is wrong, (ignoring, among other things, the possibility that even if they do not know other people might). That is surely an essentially irreligious attitude, degrading God to the level of a magician called in as a last resort to clear up difficulties by some mysterious magic. It is a very good example of " managing God." The truly Christian way surely is to have a faith which believes that the issue is in God's hands in every case, and to use every method which science—that is to say, God—has made known to us, to co-operate with Him in the work of healing.

I have rather digressed from what I was saying about the healing ministry of the Church. It seems at least open to question whether Christ's command to heal the sick was a literal and comprehensive instruction even to those to whom it was directly addressed, and also whether it referred to " spiritual " healing at all. I recall only one instance in the Gospels where Jesus spoke of the treatment of illness by some other person than himself, namely in the story

of the Good Samaritan. Here was a man faced with illness on the roadside. He was not a physician, he had no medicines or appliances with him ; it would seem a favourable opportunity to employ faith-healing, or at least to engage in prayer. But, according to Jesus, this good man did nothing of the sort. He did his best, with the limited means available, to treat the case on lines which, in principle, modern medicine would entirely approve, binding up the wounds with the antiseptic wine and the soothing oil and then telling the landlord to see that the patient was kept quiet and given light diet. This story of healing is full of the spirit of Jesus and of the strong common sense which is no negligible part of that spirit, but there is not a word about prayer or laying on of hands in it, and the use of the oil was strictly materialistic. And what Jesus said about the story was, " Go and do likewise."

It is claimed that preaching and healing are, or ought to be, the twin functions of the Church, the one as essential and divine as the other. But in regard to preaching the Church is quite rightly very jealous. We pride ourselves on an educated ministry, tests of faith and character are not enough, and a man has to be trained for several years before the Church will licence him to preach and administer the Sacraments. The medical profession itself is not more firmly set against " unqualified " men. If then the Church would in the same way train its

workers in what to heal and how to heal, as it trains them now in what to preach and how to preach, its claim would at least be consistent. Of course in that event what would happen would be that, as the healers learned something about disease, they would degenerate—or develop —into ordinary Christian doctors, working by ordinary medical methods. That, as a matter of history, is what *has* happened, which is why the separation of medicine from the Church — though not from religion — was inevitable.

I confess I can see no future for this faith-healing movement, especially in its more extreme forms. It will doubtless persist in certain circles, and cases will crop up from time to time which, to the uncritical and unthinking, will appear to support its claims, but to my mind neither its doctrines nor its results will stand examination from either a religious or a scientific point of view. May I repeat, in conclusion, that I am very far from wishing to eliminate God and the power of God from any relationship to disease or its healing, or to minimise the value for mental and bodily health of a personal faith in Him. But the sort of faith which is needed is one which believes that He is not only above the world but in it, that He has expressed Himself in natural laws and material things and will work through them, because He cannot deny Himself. He does not change or avert the working of natural forces and processes, but—

what is much more wonderful—He makes them all work together for good. The facts of life and the teaching of Jesus confirm that as the real miracle, and belief in it as the highest faith.

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